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GEORGE WASHINGTON
THE MAN

BY

HENRY CABOT LODGE

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FOREWORD

As one of the most sympathetic pen pictures of George Washington the man, there is here reprinted the final chapter of Henry Cabot Lodge's biography of our first President. We preface the chapter by a few paragraphs from Senator Lodge's own Introduction to his book. It is believed that this portrayal of the personal side of this great character will make an immediate and lasting appeal to students in junior and senior high school grades. It is a timely contribution to the 1932 observations of the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Washington.

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GEORGE WASHINGTON THE MAN

BY HENRY CABOT LODGE

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FEBRUARY 9 in the year 1800 was a gala day in Paris. Napoleon had decreed a triumphal procession, and on that day a splendid military ceremony was performed in the Champ de Mars, and the trophies of the Egyptian expedition were exultingly displayed. There were, however, two features in all this pomp and show which seemed strangely out of keeping with the glittering pageant and the sounds of victorious rejoicing. The standards and flags of the army were hung with crape, and after the grand parade the dignitaries of the land proceeded solemnly to the Temple of Mars, and heard the eloquent M. de Fontanes deliver an "Eloge Funèbre."

About the same time, if tradition may be trusted, the flags upon the conquering Channel fleet of England were lowered to half-mast in token of grief for the same event which had caused the armies of France to wear the customary badges of mourning.

If some "traveler from an antique land" had observed these manifestations, he would have wondered much whose memory it was that had called them forth from these two great nations, then struggling fiercely with each other for supremacy on

land and sea. His wonder would not have abated had he been told that the man for whom they mourned had wrested an empire from one, and at the time of his death was arming his countrymen against the other.

These signal honors were paid by England and France to a simple Virginian gentleman who had never left his own country, and who when he died held no other office than the titular command of a provisional army. Yet although these marks of respect from foreign nations were notable and striking, they were slight and formal in comparison with the silence and grief which fell upon the people of the United States when they heard that Washington was dead. He had died in the fullness of time, quietly, quickly, and in his own house, and yet his death called out a display of grief which has rarely been equaled in history. The trappings and suits of woe were there of course, but what made this mourning memorable was that the land seemed hushed with sadness, and that the sorrow dwelt among the people and was neither forced nor fleeting. Men carried it home with them to their firesides and to their churches, to their offices and their workshops. Every preacher took the life which had closed as the noblest of texts, and every orator made it the theme of his loftiest eloquence....

From that time to this, the stream of praise has flowed on, ever deepening and strengthening, both at home and abroad. Washington alone in history seems to have risen so high in the estimation of men

that criticism has shrunk away abashed, and has only been heard whispering in corners.

We know his deeds; but what was it in the man which has given him such a place in the affection, the respect, and the imagination of his fellow men throughout the world?

The real man has been so overlaid with myth and traditions that he has been well-nigh lost. In the words of the historian McMaster, "General Washington is known to us, and President Washington. But George Washington is an unknown man." Mr. McMaster might have added that to no man in our history has greater injustice of a certain kind been done, or more misunderstanding been meted out, than to Washington, and although this sounds like the merest paradox, it is nevertheless true. From the hour when the door of the tomb at Mount Vernon closed behind his coffin to the present instant, the chorus of praise and eulogy has never ceased, but has swelled deeper and louder with each succeeding year. He has been set apart high above all other men, and reverenced with the unquestioning veneration accorded only to the leaders of mankind and the founders of nations; and in this very devotion lies one secret at least of the fact that, while all men have praised Washington, comparatively few have understood him. He has been lifted high up into a lonely greatness, and unconsciously put outside the range of human sympathy. He has been accepted as a being as nearly perfect as it is given to man to be, but our warm personal

interest has been reserved for other and lesser men who seemed to be nearer to us in their virtues and their errors alike. Such isolation, lofty though it be, is perilous and leads to grievous misunderstandings. From it has come the widespread idea that Washington was cold, and as devoid of human sympathies as he was free from the common failings of humanity.

Of this there will be something to say presently, but meantime there is another more prolific source of error in regard to Washington to be considered. Men who are loudly proclaimed to be faultless always excite a certain kind of resentment. It is a dangerous eminence for any one to occupy. The temples of Greece are in ruins, and her marvelous literature is little more than a collection of fragments, but the feelings of the citizens who exiled Aristides because they were weary of hearing him called "just," exist still, unchanged and unchangeable. Washington has not only been called "just," but he has had every other good quality attributed to him by countless biographers and eulogists with an almost painful iteration, and the natural result has followed. Many persons have felt the sense of fatigue which the Athenians expressed practically by their oyster shells, and have been led to cast doubts on Washington's perfection as the only consolation for their own sense of injury. Then, again, Washington's fame has been so overshadowing, and his greatness so immutable, that he has been very inconvenient to the admirers and

the biographers of other distinguished men. From these two sources, from the general jealousy of the classic Greek variety, and the particular jealousy born of the necessities of some other hero, much adverse and misleading criticism has come. It has never been a safe or popular amusement to assail Washington directly, and this course usually has been shunned; but although the attacks have been veiled they have none the less existed, and they have been all the more dangerous because they were insidious.

In his lifetime Washington had his enemies and detractors in abundance. During the Revolution he was abused and intrigued against, thwarted and belittled, to a point which posterity in general scarcely realizes. Final and conclusive victory brought an end to this, and he passed to the presidency amid a general acclaim. Then the attacks began again. Their character has been shown in a previous chapter, but they were of no real moment except as illustrations of the existence and meaning of party divisions. The ravings of Bache and Freneau, and the coarse insults of Giles, were all totally unimportant in themselves. They merely define the purposes and character of the party which opposed Washington, and but for him would be forgotten. Among his eminent contemporaries, Jefferson and Pickering, bitterly opposed in all things else, have left memoranda and letters reflecting upon the abilities of their former chief. Jefferson disliked him because he blocked his path,

but with habitual caution he never proceeded beyond a covert sneer implying that Washington's mental powers, at no time very great, were impaired by age during his presidency, and that he was easily deceived by practised intriguers. Pickering, with more boldness, set Washington down as commonplace, not original in his thought, and vastly inferior to Hamilton, apparently because he was not violent, and did not make up his mind before he knew the facts.

Adverse contemporary criticism, however, is slight in amount and vague in character; it can be readily dismissed, and it has in no case weight enough to demand much consideration. Modern criticism of the same kind has been even less direct, but is much more serious and cannot be lightly passed over. It invariably proceeds by negations setting out with an apparently complete acceptance of Washington's greatness, and then assailing him by telling us what he was not. Few persons who have not given this matter a careful study realize how far criticism of this sort has gone, and there is indeed no better way of learning what Washington really was than by examining the various negations which tell us what he was not.

Let us take the gravest first. It has been confidently asserted that Washington was not an American in anything but the technical sense. This idea is more diffused than, perhaps, would be generally supposed, and it has also been formally set down in print, in which we are more fortunate than in

many other instances where the accusation has not got beyond the elusive condition of loose talk.

In that most noble poem, the "Commemoration Ode," Mr. Lowell speaks of Lincoln as "the first American." The poet's winged words fly far, and find a resting-place in many minds. This idea has become widespread, and has recently found fuller expression in Mr. Clarence King's prefatory note to the great life of Lincoln by Hay and Nicolay.[1] Mr. King says: "Abraham Lincoln was the first American to reach the lonely height of immortal fame. Before him, within the narrow compass of our history, were but two preëminent names, — Columbus the discoverer, and Washington the founder; the one an Italian seer, the other an English country gentleman. In a narrow sense, of course, Washington was an American. . . . For all that he was English in his nature, habits, moral standards, and social theories; in short, in all points which, aside from mere geographical position, make up a man, he was as thorough-going a British colonial gentleman as one could find anywhere beneath the Union Jack. The genuine American of Lincoln's type came later. . . . George Washington, an English commoner, vanquished George, an English king."

In order to point his sentence and prove his first

[1] Mr. Matthew Arnold, and more recently Professor Goldwin Smith, have both spoken of Washington as an Englishman. I do not mention this to discredit the statements of Mr. Lowell or Mr. King, but merely to indicate how far this mistaken idea has traveled.

postulate, Mr. King is obliged not only to dispose of Washington, but to introduce Columbus, who never was imagined in the wildest fantasy to be an American, and to omit Franklin. The omission of itself is fatal to Mr. King's case. Franklin has certainly a "preëminent name." He has, too, "immortal fame," although of course of a widely different character from that of either Washington or Lincoln, but he was a great man in the broad sense of a world-wide reputation. Yet no one has ever ventured to call Benjamin Franklin an Englishman. He was a colonial American, of course, but he was as intensely an American as any man who has lived on this continent before or since. A man of the people, he was American by the character of his genius, by his versatility, the vivacity of his intellect, and his mental dexterity. In his abilities, his virtues, and his defects he was an American, and so plainly one as to be beyond the reach of doubt or question. There were others of that period, too, who were as genuine Americans as Franklin or Lincoln. Such were Jonathan Edwards, the peculiar product of New England Calvinism; Patrick Henry, who first broke down colonial lines to declare himself an American; Samuel Adams, the great forerunner of the race of American politicians; Thomas Jefferson, the idol of American democracy. These and many others Mr. King might exclude on the ground that they did not reach the lonely height of immortal fame. But Franklin is enough. Unless one is

prepared to set Franklin down as an Englishman, which would be as reasonable as to say that Daniel Webster was a fine example of the Slavic race, it must be admitted that it was possible for the thirteen colonies to produce in the eighteenth century a genuine American who won immortal fame. If they could produce one of one type, they could produce a second of another type, and there was, therefore, nothing inherently impossible in existing conditions to prevent Washington from being an American.

Lincoln was undoubtedly the first great American of his type, but that is not the only type of American. It is one which, as bodied forth in Abraham Lincoln, commands the love and veneration of the people of the United States, and the admiration of the world wherever his name is known. To the noble and towering greatness of his mind and character it does not add one hair's breadth to say that he was the first American, or that he was of a common or uncommon type. Greatness like Lincoln's is far beyond such qualifications, and least of all is it necessary to his fame to push Washington from his birthright. To say that George Washington, an English commoner, vanquished George, an English king, is clever and picturesque, but like many other pleasing antitheses it is painfully inaccurate. Allegiance does not make race or nationality. The Hindoos are subjects of Victoria, but they are not Englishmen.

Franklin shows that it was possible to produce a

most genuine American of unquestioned greatness in the eighteenth century, and with all possible deference to Mr. Lowell and Mr. King, I venture the assertion that George Washington was as genuine an American as Lincoln or Franklin. He was an American of the eighteenth and not of the nineteenth century, but he was none the less an American. I will go further. Washington was not only an American of a pure and noble type, but he was the first thorough American in the broad, national sense, as distinct from the colonial American of his time.

After all, what is it to be an American? Surely it does not consist in the number of generations merely which separate the individual from his forefathers who first settled here. Washington was fourth in descent from the first American of his name, while Lincoln was in the sixth generation. This difference certainly constitutes no real distinction. There are people to-day, not many luckily, whose families have been here for two hundred and fifty years, and who are as utterly un-American as it is possible to be, while there are others, whose fathers were immigrants, who are as intensely American as any one can desire or imagine. In a new country, peopled in two hundred and fifty years by immigrants from the Old World and their descendants, the process of Americanization is not limited by any hard and fast rules as to time and generations, but is altogether a matter of individual and race temperament. The production of the

well-defined American types and of the fixed national characteristics which now exist has been going on during all that period, but in any special instance the type to which a given man belongs must be settled by special study and examination.

Washington belonged to the English-speaking race. So did Lincoln. Both sprang from the splendid stock which was formed during centuries from a mixture of the Celtic, Teutonic, Scandinavian, and Norman peoples, and which is known to the world as English. Both, so far as we can tell, had nothing but English blood, as it would be commonly called, in their veins, and both were of that part of the English race which emigrated to America, where it has been the principal factor in the development of the new people called Americans. They were men of English race, modified and changed in the fourth and sixth generations by the new country, the new conditions, and the new life, and by the contact and admixture of other races. Lincoln, a very great man, one who has reached "immortal fame," was clearly an American of a type that the Old World cannot show, or at least has not produced. The idea of many persons in regard to Washington seems to be, that he was a great man of a type which the Old World, or, to be more exact, which England, had produced. One hears it often said that Washington was simply an American Hampden. Such a comparison is an easy method of description, nothing more. Hampden is memorable among men, not for his

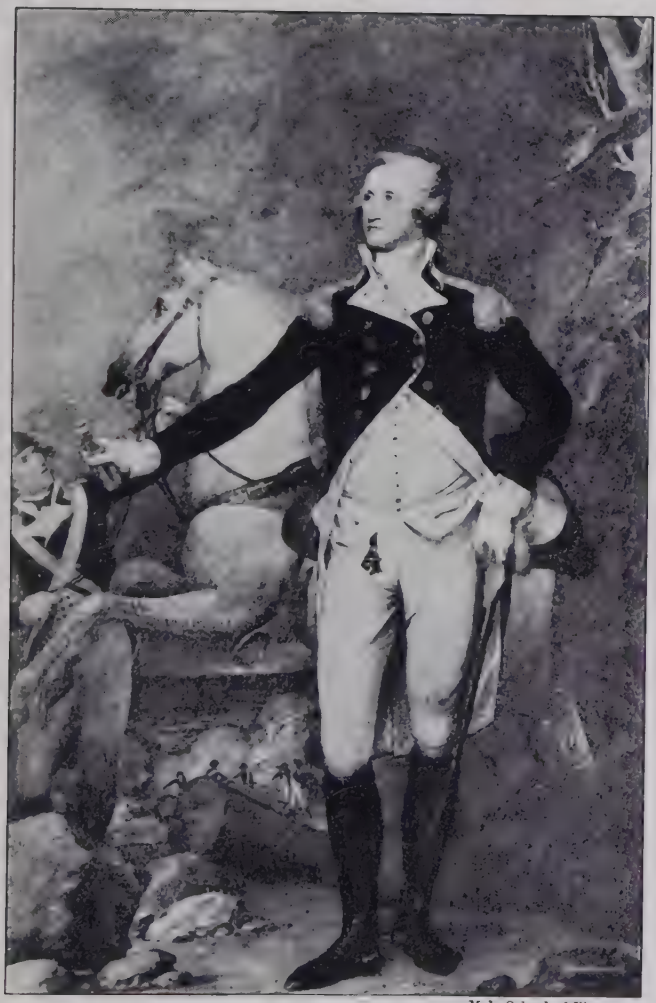
abilities, which there is no reason to suppose were very extraordinary, but for his devoted and unselfish patriotism, his courage, his honor, and his pure and lofty spirit. He embodied what his countrymen believe to be the moral qualities of their race in their finest flower, and no nation, be it said, could have a nobler ideal. Washington was conspicuous for the same qualities, exhibited in like fashion. Is there a single one of the essential attributes of Hampden that Lincoln also did not possess? Was he not an unselfish and devoted patriot, pure in heart, gentle of spirit, high of honor, brave, merciful, and temperate? Did he not lay down his life for his country in the box at Ford's Theatre as ungrudgingly as Hampden offered his in the smoke of battle upon Chalgrove field? Surely we must answer Yes. In other words, these three men all had the great moral attributes which are the characteristics of the English race in its highest and purest development on either side of the Atlantic. Yet no one has ever called Lincoln an American Hampden simply because Hampden and Washington were men of ancient family, members of an aristocracy by birth, and Lincoln was not. This is the distinction between them; and how vain it is, in the light of their lives and deeds, which make all pedigrees and social ranks look so poor and worthless! The differences among them are trivial, the resemblances deep and lasting.

I have followed out this comparison because it

illustrates perfectly the entirely superficial character of the reasons which have led men to speak of Washington as an English country gentleman. It has been said that he was English in his habits, moral standards, and social theories, which has an important sound, but which for the most part comes down to a question of dress and manners. He wore black velvet and powdered hair, knee-breeches and diamond buckles, which are certainly not American fashions to-day. But they were American fashions in the last century, and every man wore them who could afford to, no matter what his origin. Let it be remembered, however, that Washington also wore the hunting-shirt and fringed leggins of the backwoodsman, and that it was he who introduced this purely American dress into the army as a uniform.

His manners likewise were those of the century in which he lived, formal and stately, and of course colored by his own temperament. His moral standards were those of a high-minded, honorable man. Are we ready to say that they were not American? Did they differ in any vital point from those of Lincoln? His social theories were simple in the extreme. He neither overvalued nor underrated social conventions, for he knew that they were a part of the fabric of civilized society, not vitally important and yet not wholly trivial. He was a member of an aristocracy, it is true, both by birth and situation. There was a recognized social aristocracy in every colony before the Revolution, for

the drum-beat of the great democratic march had not then sounded. In the northern colonies it was never strong, and in New England it was especially weak, for the governments and people there were essentially democratic, although they hardly recognized it themselves. In Virginia and the southern colonies, on the other hand, there was a vigorous aristocracy resting on the permanent foundation of slavery. Where slaves are there must be masters, and where there are masters there are aristocrats; but it was an American and not an English aristocracy. Lineage and family had weight in the south as in the north, but that which put a man undeniably in the ruling class was the ownership of black slaves and the possession of a white skin. This aristocracy lasted with its faults and its virtues until it perished in the shock of civil war, when its foundation of human slavery was torn from under it. From the slave-holding aristocracy of Virginia came, with the exception of Patrick Henry, all the great men of that State who did so much for American freedom, and who rendered such imperishable service to the republic in law, in politics, and in war. From this aristocracy came Marshall, and Mason, and Madison, the Lees, the Randolphs, the Harrisons, and the rest. From it came also Thomas Jefferson, the hero of American democracy; and to it was added Patrick Henry, not by lineage or slave-holding, but by virtue of his brilliant abilities, and because he, too, was an aristocrat by the immutable division of race. It



Yale School of Fine Arts

WASHINGTON AT THE BATTLE OF TRENTON
A painting by John Trumbull

was this aristocracy into which Washington was born, and amid which he was brought up. To say that it colored his feelings and habits is simply to say that he was human; but to urge that it made him un-American is to exclude at once from the ranks of Americans all the great men given to the country by the South. Washington, in fact, was less affected by his surroundings, and rose above them more quickly, than any other man of his day, because he was the greatest man of his time, with a splendid breadth of vision.

When he first went among the New England troops at the siege of Boston, the rough, democratic ways of the people jarred upon him, and offended especially his military instincts, for he was not only a Virginian but he was a great soldier, and military discipline is essentially aristocratic. These volunteer soldiers, called together from the plough and the fishing-smack, were free and independent men, unaccustomed to any rule but their own, and they had still to learn the first rudiments of military service. To Washington, soldiers who elected and deposed their officers, and who went home when they felt that they had a right to do so, seemed well-nigh useless and quite incomprehensible. They angered him and tried his patience almost beyond endurance, and he spoke of them at the outset in harsh terms by no means wholly unwarranted. But they were part of his problem, and he studied them. He was a soldier, but not an aristocrat wrapped up in immutable prejudices,

and he learned to know these men, and they came to love, obey, and follow him with an intelligent devotion far better than anything born of mere discipline. Before the year was out, he wrote to Lund Washington praising the New England troops in the highest terms, and at the close of the war he said that practically the whole army then was composed of New England soldiers. They stayed by him to the end, and as they were steadfast in war so they remained in peace. He trusted and confided in New England, and her sturdy democracy gave him a loyal and unflinching support to the day of his death.

This openness of mind and superiority to prejudice were American in the truest and best sense; but Washington showed the same qualities in private life and toward individuals which he displayed in regard to communities. He was free, of course, from the cheap claptrap which abuses the name of democracy by saying that birth, breeding, and education are undemocratic, and therefore to be reckoned against a man. He valued these qualities rightly, but he looked to see what a man was and not who he was, which is true democracy. The two men who were perhaps nearest to his affections were Knox and Hamilton. One was a Boston bookseller, who rose to distinction by bravery and good service, and the other was a young adventurer from the West Indies, without either family or money at his back. It was the same with much humbler persons. He never failed, on his way to

Philadelphia, to stop at Wilmington and have a chat with one Captain O'Flinn, who kept a tavern and had been a Revolutionary soldier; and this was but a single instance among many of like character. Any soldier of the Revolution was always sure of a welcome at the hands of his old commander. Eminent statesmen, especially of the opposition, often found his manner cold, but no old soldier ever complained of it, no servant ever left him, and the country people about Mount Vernon loved him as a neighbor and friend, and not as the distant great man of the army and the presidency.

He believed thoroughly in popular government. One does not find in his letters the bitter references to democracy and to the populace which can be discovered in the writings of so many of his party friends, legacies of pre-revolutionary ideas inflamed by hatred of Parisian mobs. He always spoke of the people at large with a simple respect, because he knew that the future of the United States was in their hands and not in that of any class, and because he believed that they would fulfill their mission. The French Revolution never carried him away, and when it bred anarchy and bloodshed he became hostile to French influence, because license and disorder were above all things hateful to him. Yet he did not lose his balance in the other direction, as was the case with so many of his friends. He resisted and opposed French ideas and French democracy, so admired and so loudly preached by Jefferson and his followers,

because he esteemed them perilous to the country. But there is not a word to indicate that he did not think that such dangers would be finally overcome, even if at the cost of much suffering, by the sane sense and ingrained conservatism of the American people. Other men talked more noisily about the people, but no one trusted them in the best sense more than Washington, and his only fear was that evils might come from their being misled by false lights.

Once more, what is it to be an American? Putting aside all the outer shows of dress and manners, social customs and physical peculiarities, is it not to believe in America and in the American people? Is it not to have an abiding and moving faith in the future and in the destiny of America? — something above and beyond the patriotism and love which every man whose soul is not dead within him feels for the land of his birth? Is it not to be national and not sectional, independent and not colonial? Is it not to have a high conception of what this great new country should be, and to follow out that ideal with loyalty and truth?

Has any man in our history fulfilled these conditions more perfectly and completely than George Washington? Has any man ever lived who served the American people more faithfully, or with a higher and truer conception of the destiny and possibilities of the country? Born of an old and distinguished family, he found himself, when a boy just out of school, dependent on his mother, and

with an inheritance that promised him more acres than shillings. He did not seek to live along upon what he could get from the estate, and still less did he feel that it was only possible for him to enter one of the learned professions. Had he been an Englishman in fact or in feeling, he would have felt very naturally the force of the limitations imposed by his social position. But being an American, his one idea was to earn his living honestly, because it was the creed of his country that earning an honest living is the most creditable thing a man can do. Boy as he was, he went out manfully into the world to win with his own hands the money which would make him self-supporting and independent. His business as a surveyor took him into the wilderness, and there he learned that the first great work before the American people was to be the conquest of the continent. He dropped the surveyor's rod and chain to negotiate with the savages, and then took up the sword to fight them and the French, so that the New World might be secured to the English-speaking race. A more purely American training cannot be imagined. It was not the education of universities or of courts, but that of hard-earned personal independence, won in the backwoods and by frontier fighting. Thus trained, he gave the prime of his manhood to leading the Revolution which made his country free, and his riper years to building up that independent nationality without which freedom would have been utterly vain.

He was the first to rise above all colonial or state lines, and grasp firmly the conception of a nation to be formed from the thirteen jarring colonies. The necessity of national action in the army was of course at once apparent to him, although not to others; but he carried the same broad views into widely different fields, where at the time they wholly escaped notice. It was Washington, oppressed by a thousand cares, who in the early days of the Revolution saw the need of Federal courts for admiralty cases and for other purposes. It was he who suggested this scheme, years before any one even dreamed of the Constitution; and from the special committees of Congress, formed for this object in accordance with this advice, came, in the process of time, the Federal judiciary of the United States.[1] Even in that early dawn of the Revolution, Washington had clear in his own mind the need of a continental system for war, diplomacy, finance, and law, and he worked steadily to bring this policy to fulfilment.

When the war was over, the thought that engaged his mind most was of the best means to give room for expansion, and to open up the unconquered continent to the forerunners of a mighty army of settlers. For this purpose all his projects for roads, canals, and surveys were formed and forced into public notice. He looked beyond the limits of the Atlantic colonies. His vision went

[1] See the very interesting memoir on this subject by the Hon. J. C. Bancroft Davis.

far over the barriers of the Alleghanies; and where others saw thirteen infant States backed by the wilderness, he beheld the germs of a great empire. While striving thus to lay the West open to the march of the settler, he threw himself into the great struggle, where Hamilton and Madison, and all who "thought continentally," were laboring for that union without which all else was worse than futile.

From the presidency of the convention that formed the Constitution, he went to the presidency of the government which that convention brought into being; and in all that followed, the one guiding thought was to clear the way for the advance of the people, and to make that people and their government independent in thought, in policy, and in character, as the Revolution had made them independent politically. The same spirit which led him to write during the war that our battles must be fought and our victories won by Americans, if victory and independence were to be won at all, or to have any real and solid worth, pervaded his whole administration. We see it in his Indian policy, which was directed not only to pacifying the tribes, but to putting it out of their power to arrest or even delay western settlement. We see it in his attitude toward foreign ministers, and in his watchful persistence in regard to the Mississippi, which ended in our securing the navigation of the great river. We see it again in his anxious desire to keep peace until we had passed the point

where war might bring a dissolution; and how real that danger was, and how clear and just his perception of it, is shown by the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions and by the separatist movement in New England during the later war of 1812. Even in 1812 the national existence was menaced, but the danger would have proved fatal if it had come twenty years earlier, with parties divided by their sympathies with contending foreign nations. It was for the sake of the Union that Washington was so patient with France, and faced so quietly the storm of indignation aroused by the Jay treaty.

In his whole foreign policy, which was so peculiarly his own, the American spirit was his pole star; and of all the attacks made upon him, the only one which really tried his soul was the accusation that he was influenced by foreign predilections. The blind injustice, which would not comprehend that his one purpose was to be American and to make the people and the government American, touched him more deeply than anything else. As party strife grew keener over the issues raised by the war between France and England, and as French politics and French ideas became more popular, his feelings found more frequent utterance, and it is interesting to see how this man, who, we are now told, was an English country gentleman, wrote and felt on this matter in very trying times. Let us remember, as we listen to him now in his own defense, that he was an extremely honest man, silent for the most part in doing his work,

but when he spoke meaning every word he said, and saying exactly what he meant. This was the way in which he wrote to Patrick Henry in October, 1795, when he offered him the secretaryship of State: —

"My ardent desire is, and my aim has been as far as depended upon the executive department, to comply strictly with all our engagements, foreign and domestic; but to keep the United States free from political connection with every other country, to see them independent of all and under the influence of none. In a word, I want an *American* character, that the powers of Europe may be convinced that we act for *ourselves*, and not for others. This, in my judgment, is the only way to be respected abroad and happy at home; and not, by becoming partisans of Great Britain or France, create dissensions, disturb the public tranquillity, and destroy, perhaps forever, the cement which binds the Union."

Not quite a year later, when the Jay treaty was still agitating the public mind in regard to our relations with France, he wrote to Pickering: —

"The Executive has a plain road to pursue, namely, to fulfill all the engagements which duty requires; be influenced beyond this by none of the contending parties; maintain a strict neutrality unless obliged by imperious circumstances to depart from it; do justice to all, and never forget that we are Americans, the remembrance of which will convince us that we ought not to be French or English."

After leaving the presidency, when our difficulties with France seemed to be thickening, and the sky looked very dark, he wrote to a friend saying that he firmly believed that all would come out well, and then added: "To me this is so demonstrable, that not a particle of doubt could dwell on my mind relative thereto, if our citizens would advocate their own cause, instead of that of any other nation under the sun; that is, if, instead of being Frenchmen or Englishmen in politics they would be Americans, indignant at every attempt of either or any other powers to establish an influence in our councils or presume to sow the seeds of discord or disunion among us."

A few days later he wrote to Thomas Pinckney: "It remains to be seen whether our country will stand upon independent ground, or be directed in its political concerns by any other nation. A little time will show who are its true friends, or, what is synonymous, who are true Americans."

But this eager desire for a true Americanism did not stop at our foreign policy, or our domestic politics. He wished it to enter into every part of the life and thought of the people, and when it was proposed to bring over the entire staff of a Genevan university to take charge of a national university here, he threw his influence against it, expressing grave doubts as to the advantage of importing an entire "seminary of foreigners," for the purpose of American education. The letter on this subject, which was addressed to John Adams, then continued: —

"My opinion with respect to emigration is that except of useful mechanics, and some particular descriptions of men or professions, there is no need of encouragement; while the policy or advantage of its taking place in a body (I mean the settling of them in a body) may be much questioned; for by so doing they retain the language, habits, and principles, good or bad, which they bring with them. Whereas by an intermixture with our people, they or their descendants get assimilated to our customs, measures, and laws; in a word, soon become one people."

He had this thought so constantly in his mind that it found expression in his will, in the clause bequeathing certain property for the foundation of a university in the District of Columbia. "I proceed," he said, "after this recital for the more correct understanding of the case, to declare that it has always been a source of serious regret with me to see the youth of these United States sent to foreign countries for the purposes of education, often before their minds were formed, or they had imbibed any adequate ideas of the happiness of their own; contracting too frequently not only habits of dissipation and extravagance, but *principles unfriendly to republican government and to the true and genuine liberties of mankind*, which thereafter are rarely overcome; for these reasons it has been my ardent wish to see a plan devised on a liberal scale, which would have a tendency to spread systematic ideas through all parts of this

rising empire, thereby to do away with local attachments and state prejudices, as far as the nature of things would or indeed ought to admit, from our national councils."

Were these the words of an English country gentleman, who chanced to be born in one of England's colonies? Persons of the English country gentleman pattern at that time were for the most part loyalists; excellent people, very likely, but not of the Washington type. Their hopes and ideals, their policies and their beliefs were in the mother country, not here. The faith, the hope, the thought, of Washington were all in the United States. His one purpose was to make America independent in thought and action, and he strove day and night to build up a nation. He labored unceasingly to lay the foundations of the great empire which, with almost prophetic vision, he saw beyond the mountains, by opening the way for the western movement. His foreign policy was a declaration to the world of a new national existence, and he strained every nerve to lift our politics from the colonial condition of foreign issues. He wished all immigration to be absorbed and moulded here, so that we might be one people, one in speech and in political faith. His last words, given to the world after the grave had closed over him, were a solemn plea for a home training for the youth of the Republic, so that all men might think as Americans, untainted by foreign ideas, and rise above all local prejudices.

He did not believe that mere material development was the only or the highest goal; for he knew that the true greatness of a nation was moral and intellectual, and his last thoughts were for the up-building of character and intelligence. He was never a braggart, and mere boasting about his country as about himself was utterly repugnant to him. He never hesitated to censure what he believed to be wrong, but he addressed his criticisms to his countrymen in order to lead them to better things, and did not indulge in them in order to express his own discontent, or to amuse or curry favor with foreigners. In a word, he loved his country, and had an abiding faith in its future and in its people, upon whom his most earnest thoughts and loftiest aspirations were centred. No higher, purer, or more thorough Americanism than his could be imagined. It was a conception far in advance of the time, possible only to a powerful mind, capable of lifting itself out of existing conditions and alien influences, so that it might look with undazzled gaze upon the distant future. The first American in the broad national sense, there has never been a man more thoroughly and truly American than Washington. It will be a sorry day when we consent to take that noble figure from "the forefront of the nation's life," and rank George Washington as anything but an American of Americans, instinct with the ideas, as he was devoted to the fortunes of the New World which gave him birth.

There is another class of critics who have attacked Washington from another side. These are the gentlemen who find him in the way of their own heroes. Washington was a man of decided opinions about men as well as measures, and he was extremely positive. He had his enemies as well as his friends, his likes and his dislikes, strong and clear, according to his nature. The respect which he commanded in his life has lasted unimpaired since his death, and it is an awkward thing for the biographers of some of his contemporaries to know that Washington opposed, distrusted, or disliked their heroes. Therefore, in one way or another they have gone round a stumbling-block which they could not remove. The commonest method is to eliminate Washington by representing him vaguely as the great man with whom every one agreed, who belonged to no party, and favored all; then he is pushed quietly aside. Evils and wrong-doing existed under his administration from the opposition point of view, but they were the work of his ministers and of wicked advisers. The king could do no wrong, and this pleasant theory, which is untrue in fact, amounts to saying that Washington had no opinions, but was simply a grand and imposing figure-head. The only ground for it which is even suggested is that he sought advice, that he used other men's ideas, and that he made up his mind slowly. All this is true, and these very qualities help to show his greatness, for only small minds mistake their relations with the

universe, and confuse their finite powers with omniscience. The great man, who sees facts and reads the future, uses other men, knows the bounds of possibility in action, can decide instantly if need be, but leaves rash conclusions to those who are incapable of reaching any others. In reality there never was a man who had more definite and vigorous opinions than Washington, and the responsibility which he bore he never shifted to other shoulders. The work of the Revolution and the presidency, whether good or bad, was his own, and he was ready to stand or fall by it.

There is a still further extension of the idea that Washington represented all parties and all views, and had neither party nor opinions of his own. This theory is to the effect that he was great by character alone, but that in other respects he did not rise above the level of dignified commonplace. Such, for instance, is apparently the view of Mr. Parton, who in a clever essay discusses in philosophical fashion the possible advantages arising from the success attained by mere character, as in the case of Washington. Mr. Parton points his theory by that last incident of counting the pulse as death drew nigh. How characteristic, he exclaims, of the methodical, commonplace man, is such an act. It was not common, be it said, even were it commonplace. It was certainly a very simple action, but rare enough so far as we know on the every-day deathbed, or in the supreme hour of dying greatness, and it was wholly free from

that affectation which Dr. Johnson thought almost inseparable from the last solemn moment. Irregularity is not proof of genius any more than method, and of the two, the latter is the surer companion of greatness. The last hour of Washington showed that calm, collected courage which had never failed in war or peace; and so far it was proof of character. But was it not something more? The commonplace action of counting the pulse was in reality profoundly characteristic, for it was the last exhibition of the determined purpose to know the truth, and grasp the fact. Death was upon him; he would know the fact. He had looked facts in the face all his life, and when the mists gathered, he would face them still.

High and splendid character, great moral qualities for after-ages to admire, he had beyond any man of modern times. But to suppose that in other respects he belonged to the ranks of mediocrity is not only a contradiction in terms, but utterly false. It was not character that fought the Trenton campaign and carried the revolution to victory. It was military genius. It was not character that read the future of America and created our foreign policy. It was statesmanship of the highest order. Without the great moral qualities which he possessed, his career would not have been possible; but it would have been quite as impossible if the intellect had not equaled the character. There is no need to argue the truism that Washington was a great man, for that is universally admitted.

But it is very needful that his greatness should be rightly understood, and the right understanding of it is by no means universal. His character has been exalted at the expense of his intellect, and his goodness has been so much insisted upon both by admirers and critics that we are in danger of forgetting that he had a great mind as well as high moral worth.

This false attitude both of praise and criticism has been so persisted in that if we accept the premises we are forced to the conclusion that Washington was actually dull, while with much more openness it is asserted that he was cold and at times even harsh. "In the mean time," says Mr. McMaster, "Washington was deprived of the services of the only two men his cold heart ever really loved." "A Cromwell with the juice squeezed out," says Carlyle somewhere, in his rough and summary fashion. Are these judgments correct? Was Washington really, with all his greatness, dull and cold? He was a great general and a great President, first in war and first in peace and all that, says our caviler, but his relaxation was in farm accounts, and his business war and politics. He could plan a campaign, preserve a dignified manner, and conduct an administration, but he could write nothing more entertaining than a state paper or a military report. He gave himself up to great affairs, he was hardly human, and he shunned the graces, the wit, and all the salt of life, and passed them by on the other side.

That Washington was serious and earnest cannot be doubted, for no man could have done what he did and been otherwise. He had little time for the lighter sides of life, and he never exerted himself to say brilliant and striking things. He was not a maker of phrases and proclamations, and the quality of the charlatan, so often found in men of the highest genius, was utterly lacking in him. He never talked or acted with an eye to dramatic effect, and this is one reason for the notion that he was dull and dry; for the world dearly loves a little charlatanism, and is never happier than in being brilliantly duped. But was he therefore really dull and juiceless, unlovable and unloving? Responsibility came upon him when a boy, and he was hardly of age when he was carrying in his hands the defense of his colony and the heavy burden of other human lives. Experience like this makes a man who is good for anything sober; but sobriety is not dullness, and if we look a little below the surface we find the ready refutation of such an idea. In his letters and even in the silent diaries we detect the keenest observation. He looked at the country, as he traveled, with the eye of the soldier and the farmer, and mastered its features and read its meaning with rapid and certain glance. It was not to him a mere panorama of fields and woods, of rivers and mountains. He saw the beauties of nature and the opportunities of the farmer, the trader, or the manufacturer wherever his gaze rested. He

gathered in the same way the statistics of the people and of their various industries. In the West Indies, on the Virginian frontier, in his journeys when he was President, he read the story of all he saw as he would have read a book, and brought it home with him for use.

In the same way he read and understood men, and had that power of choosing among them which is essential in its highest form to the great soldier or statesman. His selection never erred unless in a rare instance like that of Monroe, forced on him by political exigencies, or when the man of his choice would not serve. Congress chose Gates for the southern campaign, but Washington selected Greene, in whom he saw great military ability before any one else realized it. He took Hamilton, young and unknown, from the captaincy of an artillery company, and placed him on his personal staff. He bore with Hamilton's outbreak of temper, kept him ever in his confidence, and finally gave him the opportunity to prove himself the most brilliant of American statesmen. In the crowd of foreign volunteers, the men whom he especially selected and trusted were Lafayette and Steuben, each in his way of real value to the service. Even more remarkable than the ability to recognize great talent was his capacity to weigh and value with a nice exactness the worth of men who did not rise to the level of greatness. There is a recently published letter, too long for quotation here, in which he gives his opinions of all the leading

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officers of the Revolution,[1] and each one shows the most remarkable insight, as well as a sharp definiteness of outline that indicates complete mastery. These compact judgments were so sound that even the lapse of a century and all the study of historians and biographers find nothing in their keen analysis to alter and little to add. He did not expect to discover genius everywhere, or to find a marshal's baton in every knapsack, but he used men according to their value and possibilities, which is quite as essential as the preliminary work of selection. His military staff illustrated this faculty admirably. Every man, after a few trials and changes, fitted his place and did his particular task better than any one else could have done it. Colonel Meade, loyal and gallant, a good soldier and planter, said that Hamilton did the headwork of Washington's staff and he the riding. When the war was drawing to a close, Washington said one day to Hamilton, "You must go to the Bar, which you can reach in six months." Then turning to Meade, "Friend Dick, you must go to your plantation; you will make a good farmer, and an honest foreman of the grand jury."[2] The prediction was exactly fulfilled, with all that it implied, in both cases. But let it not be supposed that there was any touch of contempt in the advice to Meade. On the contrary, there was a little warmer

[1] *Magazine of American History*, vol. iii., 1879, p. 81.

[2] *Memoir of Rt. Rev. William Meade*, by Philip Slaughter, D. D., p. 7.

affection, if anything, for he honored success in any honest pursuit, especially in farming, which he himself loved. But he distinguished the two men perfectly, and he knew what each was and what each meant. It seems little to say, but if we stop to think of it, this power to read men aright and see the truth in them and about them is a power more precious than any other bestowed by the kindest of fairy godmothers. The lame devil of Le Sage looked into the secrets of life through the roofs of houses, and much did he find of the secret story of humanity. But the great man looking with truth and kindliness into men's natures, and reading their characters and abilities in their words and acts, has a higher and better power than that attributed to the wandering sprite, for such a man holds in his hand the surest key to success. Washington, quiet and always on the watch, after the fashion of silent greatness, studied untiringly the ever recurring human problems, and his just conclusions were powerful factors in the great result. He was slow, when he had plenty of time, in adopting a policy or plan, or in settling a public question, but he read men very quickly. He was never under any delusion as to Lee, Gates, Conway, or any of the rest who engaged against him because they were restless from the first under the suspicion that he knew them thoroughly. Arnold deceived him because his treason was utterly inconceivable to Washington, and because his remarkable gallantry excused his many faults. But

with this exception it may be safely said that Washington was never misled as to men, either as general or President. His instruments were not invariably the best and sometimes failed him, but they were always the best he could get, and he knew their defects and ran the inevitable risks with his eyes open. Such sure and rapid judgments of men and their capabilities were possible only to a man of keen perception and accurate observation, neither of which is characteristic of a slow or commonplace mind.

These qualities were, of course, gifts of nature, improved and developed by the training of a life of action on a great scale. He had received, indeed, little teaching except that of experience, and the world of war and politics had been to him both school and college. His education had been limited in the extreme, scarcely going beyond the most rudimentary branches except in mathematics, and this is very apparent in his early letters. He seems always to have written a handsome hand and to have been good at figures, but his spelling at the outset was far from perfect, and his style, although vigorous, was abrupt and rough. He felt this himself, took great pains to correct his faults in this respect, and succeeded, as he did in most things. Mr. Sparks has produced a false impression in this matter by smoothing and amending in very extensive fashion all the earlier letters, so as to give an appearance of uniformity throughout the correspondence; a process which not only

destroyed much of the vigor and force of the early writings, but made them somewhat unnatural. The surveyor and frontier soldier wrote very differently from the general of the army and the President of the United States, and the improvements of Mr. Sparks only served to hide the real man.[1]

If Washington had been of coarse fibre and heavy mind, this lack of education would have troubled him but little. His great success in that case would have served only to convince him of the uselessness of education except for inferior persons, who could not get along in the world without artificial aids. As it was, he never ceased to regret his deficiency in this respect, and when Humphreys urged him to prepare a history or

[1] These facts in regard to Washington's early letters, and to his correspondence generally, were first brought to public attention by the Reed letters, and by the controversy between Mr. Sparks and Lord Mahon. They have, of course, been long familiar to students of the original manuscripts. The full extent, however, of the changes made by Mr. Sparks, and of the mischief he wrought, and of the injustice thus done both to his hero and to posterity, has but lately been made known generally by the new edition of Washington's papers which have been published, under the supervision of Mr. W. C. Ford. Washington himself, when he undertook to arrange his military and state papers after his retirement from the presidency, began to correct the style of some of his earlier letters. This was natural enough, and he had a right to do what he pleased with his own, even if he thereby injured the material of the future historian and biographer. But he did not proceed far in his work, and the fact that he corrected a few of his own letters gave Mr. Sparks no right whatever to enter upon a wholesale revision.

memoirs of the war, he replied: "In a former letter I informed you, my dear Humphreys, that if I had talent for it, I have not leisure to turn my thoughts to commentaries. A consciousness of a defective education and a certainty of a want of time unfit me for such an undertaking." He was misled by his own modesty as to his capacity, but his strong feeling as to his lack of schooling haunted and troubled him always, although it did not make him either indifferent or bitter. He only admired more that which he himself had missed. He regarded education, and especially the higher forms, with an almost pathetic reverence, and its advancement was never absent from his thoughts. When he was made chancellor of the college of William and Mary, he was more deeply pleased than by any honor ever conferred upon him, and he accepted the position with a diffidence and a seriousness which were touching in such a man. In the same spirit he gave money to the Alexandria Academy, and every scheme to promote public education in Virginia had his eager support. His interest was not confined by state lines, for there was nothing so near his heart as the foundation of a national university. He urged its establishment upon Congress over and over again, and, as has been seen, left money in his will for its endowment.

All his sympathies and tastes were those of a man of refined mind, and of a lover of scholarship and sound learning. Naturally a very modest

man, and utterly devoid of any pretense, he underrated, as a matter of fact, his own accomplishments. He distrusted himself so much that he always turned to Hamilton, both during the Revolution and afterwards, as well as in the preparation of the farewell address, to aid him in clothing his thoughts in a proper dress, which he felt himself unable to give them. His tendency was to be too diffuse and too involved, but as a rule his style was sufficiently clear, and he could express himself with nervous force when the occasion demanded, and with a genuine and stately eloquence when he was deeply moved, as in the farewell to Congress at the close of the war. It is not a little remarkable that in his letters after the first years there is nothing to betray any lack of early training. They are the letters, not of a scholar or a literary man, but of an educated gentleman; and although he seldom indulged in similes or allusions, when he did so they were apt and correct. This was due to his perfect sanity of mind, and to his aversion to all display or to any attempt to shine in borrowed plumage. He never undertook to speak or write on any subject, or to make any reference, which he did not understand. He was a lover of books, collected a library, and read always as much as his crowded life would permit. When he was at Newburgh, at the close of the war, he wrote to Colonel Smith in New York to send him the following books: —

"Charles the XIIth of Sweden.
Lewis the XVth, 2 vols.
History of the Life and Reign of the Czar Peter the Great.
Campaigns of Marshal Turenne.
Locke on the Human Understanding.
Robertson's History of America, 2 vols.
Robertson's History of Charles V.
Voltaire's Letters.
Life of Gustavus Adolphus.
Sully's Memoirs.
Goldsmith's Natural History.
Mildman on Trees.
Vertot's Revolution of Rome, 3 vols. } If they are in
Vertot's Revolution of Portugal, 3 vols. } estimation.

If there is a good Bookseller's shop in the City, I would thank you for sending me a catalogue of the Books and their prices that I may choose such as I want."

His tastes ran to history and to works treating of war or agriculture, as is indicated both by this list and some earlier ones. It is not probable that he gave so much attention to lighter literature, although he wrote verses in his youth, and by an occasional allusion in his letters he seems to have been familiar with some of the great works of the imagination, like "Don Quixote."[1]

[1] At his death the appraisers of the estate found 863 volumes in his library, besides a great number of pamphlets, magazines, and maps. This was a large collection of books for those days, and showed that the possessor, although purely a man of affairs, loved reading and had literary tastes.

He never freed himself from the self-distrust caused by his profound sense of his own deficiencies in education, on the one hand, and his deep reverence for learning, on the other. He had fought the Revolution, which opened the way for a new nation, and was at the height of his fame when he wrote to the French officers, who begged him to visit France, that he was "too old to learn French or to talk with ladies;" and it was this feeling in a large measure which kept him from ever being a maker of phrases or a sayer of brilliant things. In other words, the fact that he was modest and sensitive has been the chief cause of his being thought dull and cold. This idea, moreover, is wholly that of posterity, for there is not the slightest indication on the part of any contemporary that Washington could not talk well and did not appear to great advantage in society. It is posterity, looking with natural weariness at endless volumes of official letters with all the angles smoothed off by the editorial plane, that has come to suspect him of being dull in mind and heavy in wit. His contemporaries knew him to be dignified and often found him stern, but they never for a moment considered him stupid, or thought him a man at whom the shafts of wit could be shot with impunity. They were fully conscious that he was as able to hold his own in conversation as he was in the cabinet or in the field; and we can easily see the justice of contemporary opinion if we take the trouble to break through the official

bark and get at the real man who wrote the letters. In many cases we find that he could employ irony and sarcasm with real force, and his powers of description, even if stilted at times, were vigorous and effective. All these qualities come out strongly in his letters, if carefully read, and his private correspondence in particular shows a keenness and point which the formalities of public intercourse veiled generally from view. We are fortunate in having the account of a disinterested and acute observer of the manner in which Washington impressed a casual acquaintance in conversation. The actor Bernard, whom we have already quoted, and whom we left with Washington at the gates of Mount Vernon, gives us the following vivid picture of what ensued: —

"In conversation his face had not much variety of expression. A look of thoughtfulness was given by the compression of the mouth and the indentations of the brow (suggesting an habitual conflict with, and mastery over, passion), which did not seem so much to disdain a sympathy with trivialities as to be incapable of denoting them. Nor had his voice, so far as I could discover in our quiet talk, much change or richness of intonation, but he always spoke with earnestness, and his eyes (glorious conductors of the light within) burned with a steady fire which no one could mistake for mere affability; they were one grand expression of the well-known line: 'I am a man, and interested in all that concerns humanity.' In one hour and

a half's conversation he touched on every topic that I brought before him with an even current of good sense, if he embellished it with little wit or verbal elegance. He spoke like a man who had felt as much as he had reflected, and reflected more than he had spoken; like one who had looked upon society rather in the mass than in detail, and who regarded the happiness of America but as the first link in a series of universal victories; for his full faith in the power of those results of civil liberty which he saw all around him led him to foresee that it would, erelong, prevail in other countries, and that the social millennium of Europe would usher in the political. When I mentioned to him the difference I perceived between the inhabitants of New England and of the Southern States, he remarked: 'I esteem those people greatly; they are the stamina of the Union and its greatest benefactors. They are continually spreading themselves too, to settle and enlighten less favored quarters. Dr. Franklin is a New Englander.' When I remarked that his observations were flattering to my country, he replied, with great good-humor, 'Yes, yes, Mr. Bernard, but I consider your country the cradle of free principles, not their armchair. Liberty in England is a sort of idol; people are bred up in the belief and love of it, but see little of its doings. They walk about freely, but then it is between high walls; and the error of its government was in supposing that after a portion of their subjects had crossed the sea to

live upon a common, they would permit their friends at home to build up those walls about them.' A black coming in at this moment with a jug of spring water, I could not repress a smile, which the general at once interpreted. 'This may seem a contradiction,' he continued, 'but I think you must perceive that it is neither a crime nor an absurdity. When we profess, as our fundamental principle, that liberty is the inalienable right of every man, we do not include madmen or idiots; liberty in their hands would become a scourge. Till the mind of the slave has been educated to perceive what are the obligations of a state of freedom, and not confound a man's with a brute's, the gift would insure its abuse. We might as well be asked to pull down our old warehouses before trade has increased to demand enlarged new ones. Both houses and slaves were bequeathed to us by Europeans, and time alone can change them; an event, sir, which, you may believe me, no man desires more heartily than I do. Not only do I pray for it, on the score of human dignity, but I can already foresee that nothing but the rooting out of slavery can perpetuate the existence of our Union, by consolidating it in a common bond of principle.'

"I now referred to the pleasant hours I had passed in Philadelphia, and my agreeable surprise at finding there so many men of talent, at which his face lit up vividly. 'I am glad to hear you, sir, who are an Englishman, say so, because you

must now perceive how ungenerous are the assertions people are always making on your side of the water. One gentleman, of high literary standing, — I allude to the Abbé Raynal, — has demanded whether America has yet produced one great poet, statesman, or philosopher. The question shows anything but observation, because it is easy to perceive the causes which have combined to render the genius of this country scientific rather than imaginative. And, in this respect, America has surely furnished her quota. Franklin, Rittenhouse, and Rush are no mean names, to which, without shame, I may append those of Jefferson and Adams, as politicians; while I am told that the works of President Edwards of Rhode Island are a text-book in polemics in many European colleges.'

"Of the replies which I made to his inquiries respecting England, he listened to none with so much interest as to those which described the character of my royal patron, the Prince of Wales. 'He holds out every promise,' remarked the general, 'of a brilliant career. He has been well educated by *events*, and I doubt not that, in his time, England will receive the benefit of her child's emancipation. She is at present bent double, and has to walk with crutches; but her offspring may teach her the secret of regaining strength, erectness, and independence.' In reference to my own pursuits he repeated the sentiments of Franklin. He feared the country was too poor to be a patron of the drama, and that only arts of a practical

nature would for some time be esteemed. The stage he considered to be an indispensable resource for settled society, and a chief refiner; not merely interesting as a comment on the history of social happiness by its exhibition of manners, but an agent of good as a school for poetry, in holding up to honor the noblest principles. 'I am too old and too far removed,' he added, 'to seek for or require this pleasure myself, but the cause is not to droop on my account. There 's my friend Mr. Jefferson has time and taste; he goes always to the play, and I 'll introduce you to him,' a promise which he kept, and which proved to me the source of the greatest benefit and pleasure."

This is by far the best account of Washington in the ordinary converse of daily life that has come down to us. The narrator belonged to the race who live by amusing their fellow-beings, and are in consequence quick to notice peculiarities and highly susceptible to being bored. Bernard, after the first interest of seeing a very eminent man had worn off, would never have lingered for an hour and a half of chat and then gone away reluctantly if his host had been either dull of speech or cold and forbidding of manner. It is evident that Washington talked well, easily, and simply, ranging widely over varied topics with a sure touch, and that he drew from the ample resources of a well-stored and reflective mind. The scraps of conversation which Bernard preserves are interesting and above the average of ordinary talk, with-

out manifesting any attempt to be either brilliant or striking, and it is also apparent that Washington had the art of putting his guest entirely at his ease by his own pleasant and friendly manner. He had picked up the English actor on the road, liked his readiness to be helpful (always an attraction to him in any one), found him well-mannered and intelligent, and brought him home to rest and chat in the pleasant summer afternoon. To Bernard he was simply the plain Virginia gentleman, with a liberal and cultivated interest in men and things, and not a trace of oppressive and conscious greatness about him. It is to be suspected that he was by no means equally genial to the herd of sight-seers who pursued him in his retirement, but in this meeting he appeared as he must always have appeared to his family and friends.

We get the same idea from the scattered allusions that we have to Washington in private life. Although silent and reserved as to himself, he was by no means averse to society, and in his own house all his guests, both great and small, felt at their ease with him, although with no temptation to be familiar. We know from more than one account that the dinners at the presidential house, as well as at Mount Vernon, were always agreeable. It was his wont to sit at table after the cloth was removed sipping a glass of wine and eating nuts, of which he was very fond, while he listened to the conversation and caused it to flow easily, not so much by what he said as by the

kindly smile and ready sympathy which made all feel at home. We can gather an idea also of the charm which he had in the informal intercourse of daily life from some of his letters on trifling matters. Here is a little note written to Mrs. Stockton in acknowledgment of a pastoral poem which she had sent him: —

"MOUNT VERNON, February 18, 1784.

"DEAR MADAM: The intemperate weather and very great care which the post riders take of themselves prevented your letter of the 4th of last month from reaching my hands till the 10th of this. I was then in the very act of setting off on a visit to my aged mother, from whence I am just returned. These reasons I beg leave to offer as an apology for my silence until now.

"It would be a pity indeed, my dear madam, if the muses should be restrained in you; it is only to be regretted that the hero of your poetical talents is not more deserving their lays. I cannot, however, from motives of pure delicacy (because I happen to be the principal character in your Pastoral) withhold my encomiums on the performance; for I think the easy, simple, and beautiful strain with which the dialogue is supported does great justice to your genius; and will not only secure Lucinda and Amista from wits and critics, but draw from them, however unwillingly, their highest plaudits; if they can relish the praises that are given, as they must admire the manner of bestowing them.

"Mrs. Washington, equally sensible with myself of the honor you have done her, joins me in most affectionate compliments to yourself, and the young ladies and gentlemen of your family.

"With sentiments of esteem, regard and respect, I have the honor to be —— ——"

This is not a matter of "great pith or moment," but it shows how pleasantly he could acknowledge a civility. The turn of the sentences smacks of the formality of the time. They sound a little labored, perhaps, to modern ears, but they were graceful according to the standard of his day, and they have a gentle courtesy which can never be out of fashion.

He had the power also of paying a compliment in an impressive and really splendid manner whenever he felt it to be deserved. When Charles Thomson, who for fifteen years had been the honored secretary of the Continental Congress, wrote to announce his retirement, Washington replied: "The present age does so much justice to the unsullied reputation with which you have always conducted yourself in the execution of the duties of your office, and posterity will find your name so honorably connected with the verification of such a multitude of astonishing facts, that my single suffrage would add little to the illustration of your merits. Yet I cannot withhold any just testimonial in favor of so old, so faithful, and so able a public officer, which might tend to soothe

his mind in the shades of retirement. Accept, then, this serious declaration, that your services have been important, as your patriotism was distinguished; and enjoy that best of all rewards, the consciousness of having done your duty well."

Dull men do not write in this fashion. It is one thing to pay a handsome compliment, although even that is not by itself easy, but to give it in addition the note of sincerity which alone makes it of real value demands both art and good feeling. Let us take one more example of this sort before we drop the subject. When the French officers were leaving America Washington wrote to De Chastellux to bid him farewell. "Our good friend, the Marquis of Lafayette," he said, "prepared me, long before I had the honor to see you, for those impressions of esteem which opportunities and your own benevolent mind have since improved into a deep and lasting friendship; a friendship which neither time nor distance can eradicate. I can truly say that never in my life have I parted with a man to whom my soul clave more sincerely than it did to you. My warmest wishes will attend you in your voyage across the Atlantic to the rewards of a generous prince, the arms of affectionate friends; and be assured that it will be one of my highest gratifications to keep up a regular intercourse with you by letter."

These letters exhibit not only the grace and point born of intelligence, but also the best of manners; by which I mean private manners, not those of the

public man, of which there will be something to say hereafter. The attraction of Washington's society as a private gentleman lay in his good sense, breadth of knowledge, and good manners. Now the essence of good manners of the highest and most genuine kind is good feeling, which is thoughtful of others, and which is impossible to a cold, hard, or insensible nature. Such manners as we see in Washington's private letters and private life would have been strange offspring from the cold heart attributed to him by Mr. McMaster. In justice to Mr. McMaster, however, be it said, the charge is not a new one. It has been hinted at and spoken of elsewhere, and many persons have suspected that such was the case from the well-meant efforts of what may be called the cherry-tree school to elevate Washington's character by depicting him as a soulless, bloodless prig. The blundering efforts of the latter need not be noticed, but the reflections of serious critics cannot be passed by. The theory of the cold heart and the unfeeling nature seems to proceed in this wise. Washington was silent and reserved, he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at, therefore he was cold; just as if mere noise and chatter had any relation to warm affections. He would take no salary from Congress, says Mr. McMaster, in fine antithesis, but he exacted his due from the family of the poor mason. This has an unpleasant sound, and suggests the man who is generous in public, and hard and grasping in

private. Mr. McMaster in this sentence, however, whether intentionally or not, is not quite accurate in his facts, and conveys by his mode of statement an entirely false impression. The story to which he refers is given by Parkinson, who wrote a book about his experiences in America in 1798–1800. Parkinson had the story from one General Stone, and it was to this effect:[1] A room was plastered at Mount Vernon on one occasion, and was paid for during the owner's absence. When Washington returned he examined the work and had it measured, as was his habit. It then appeared that an error had been made, and that fifteen shillings too much had been paid. Meantime the plasterer had died. His widow married again, and her second husband advertised in the newspapers that he was prepared to pay the debts of his predecessor and collect all moneys due him. Thereupon Washington put in his claim, which was paid as a matter of course. He did not extort the debt from the family of the poor mason, but collected it from the second husband of the widow, in response to a voluntary advertisement. It was very careful and even close dealing, but it was neither harsh nor unjust, and the writer who has preserved the story would be not a little surprised at the interpretation that has been put upon it, for he cited it, as he expressly says, merely to illustrate the extraordinary regularity and method to which he attributed much of Washington's success.

[1] Parkinson's *Tour in America*, 1798–1800, 437 and ff.

Parkinson, in this same connection, tells several other stories, vague in origin, and sounding like mere gossip, but still worthy of consideration. According to one of them, Washington maintained a public ferry, which was customary among the planters, and the public paid regular tolls for its use. On one occasion General Stone, the authority for the previous anecdote, crossed the ferry and offered a moidore in payment. The ferryman objected to receiving it, on the ground that it was short weight, but Stone insisted, and it was finally accepted. On being given to Washington it was weighed, and being found three half-pence short, the ferryman was ordered to collect the balance due. On another occasion a tenant could not make the exact change in paying his rent, and Washington would not accept the money until the tenant went to Alexandria and brought back the precise sum. There is, however, still another anecdote, which completes this series, and which shows a different application of the same rule. Washington, in traveling, was in the habit of paying at inns the same for his servants as for himself. An innkeeper once charged him three shillings and ninepence for himself, and three shillings for his servant. Thereupon Washington sent for his host, said that his servant ate as much as he, and insisted on paying the additional ninepence.

This extreme exactness in money matters, down even to the most trifling sums, was no doubt a foible, but it is well to observe that it was not a

foible which sought only a selfish advantage, for the rule which he applied to others he applied also to himself. He meant to have his due, no matter how trivial, and he meant also that others should have theirs. In trifles, as in greater things, he was scrupulously just, and although he was always generous and ready to give, he insisted rigidly on what was justly his. A gift was one thing, a business transaction was another. The man himself who told these very stories was a good example of the kindliness which went hand in hand with this exactness in business affairs. Parkinson was an Englishman, of great narrowness of mind, who came out here to be a farmer, failed, and went home to write a book in denunciation of the country. America never had a more hostile critic. According to this profound observer, there was no good land in America, and no possibility of successful agriculture. The horses were bad, the cattle were bad, and sheep-raising was impossible. There was no game, the fish and oysters were poor and watery, and no one could ever hope in this wretchedly barren land for either wealth or comfort. It was a country fit only for the reception of convicts, and the cast-off mistress of an Englishman made a good wife for an American. A person who held such views as these was not likely to be biased in favor of anything American, and his evidence as to Washington may be safely trusted as not likely to be unduly favorable. He tells us that on his arrival at Mount Vernon, with letters of introduc-

tion, he was kindly received; that this hospitality was never relaxed; and that the general lent him money. He was at least grateful, and these are his last words as to Washington: —

"To me he appeared a mild, friendly man, in company rather reserved, in private speaking with candor. His behavior to me was such that I shall ever revere his name.

"General Washington lived a great man, and died the same.

"I am of opinion that the general never knowingly did anything wrong, but did to all men as he would they should do to him."

Evidently he appeared to Mr. Parkinson kindly and generous, as well as exactly just. It is well to have the truth about Washington, and nothing but the truth. Yet in escaping from the falsehoods of the eulogist and the myth-maker, let us beware of those which spring from the reaction against the current and accepted views. I have quoted the Parkinson stories at length, because they enforce this point admirably. No *a priori* theory is safe, and to assume that Washington must have committed grave errors and been guilty of mean actions because they are common to humanity, and have not been admitted in his case, is just as misleading as to assume, as is usually done, that he was absolutely perfect and without fault.

Let it be admitted that Washington, ever ready to pay his own dues, was strict, and sometimes

severe, in demanding them of others; but let it be also remembered, this is the worst that can be said. He was always ready to overlook faults of omission or commission; he would pardon easily mismanagement or extravagance on his estate or in his household; but he had no mercy for anything that savored of ingratitude, treachery, or dishonesty, and he carried this same feeling into public as well as private affairs. No officer who had bravely done his best had anything to fear in defeat from Washington's anger. He was never unjust, and he was always kind to misfortune or mistake, but to the coward or the traitor he was entirely unforgiving. This it was which made Arnold's treason so bitter to him. Not only had he been deceived, but the country as well as himself had been most basely betrayed; and for this reason he was relentless to André, whom it is said he never saw, living or dead. The young Englishman had taken part in a wretched piece of treachery, and for the sake of the country, and as a warning to traitors, Washington would not spare him. He would never have ordered a political prisoner to be taken out and shot in a ditch, after the fashion of Napoleon; nor would he have dealt with any people as the Duke of Cumberland dealt with the clansmen after Culloden. Such performances would have seemed to him wanton as well as cruel, and he was too wise and too humane a man to be either. Indian atrocities, for instance, with which he was familiar, never led him to re-

taliate in kind. But he was perfectly prepared to exact the extremest penalty by just and recognized methods; and had it not been for the urgent entreaties of his friends, he would have sent Asgill to the scaffold, repugnant as it was to his feelings, because he felt that the murder of Huddy was a crime for which the English army was responsible, and which demanded a just and striking vengeance. He was, it may be freely confessed, of anything but a tame nature. There was a good deal of Berserker in his make-up, and he was fierce in his anger when he believed that a great wrong had been done. But because he was stern and unrelenting when he felt that justice and his duty required him to be so, no more proves that he had a cold heart than does the fact that he was silent, dignified, and reserved. Cold-blooded men are not fierce in seeking to redress the wrongs of others, nor are the fluent of speech the only kind and generous members of the human family.

Washington's whole life, indeed, contradicts the charge that he was cold of heart and sluggish of feeling. The man who wrote as he did in his extreme youth, when Indians were harrying the frontier where he commanded, was not lacking in humanity or sympathy; and such as he then was he remained to the end of his life. A soldier by instinct and experience, he never grew indifferent to the miseries of war. Human suffering always appealed to him and moved him deeply, and when it was wantonly inflicted stirred him to anger and to the desire for the wild justice of revenge.

The goodness and kindness of man's heart, however, are much more truly shown in the little details of life than in the great matters which affect classes or communities. Washington was considerate and helpful to all men, and if he was ever cold and distant in his manner, it was to the great, and not to the poor or humble. As has been indicated by his recognition of the actor Bernard, he had in high degree the royal gift of remembering names and faces. When he was at Senator Dalton's house in Newburyport, on his New England tour of 1789, he met an old servant whom he had not seen since the French war, thirty years before. He knew the man at once, spoke to him, and welcomed him. So it was with the old soldiers of the Revolution, who were always sure of a welcome, and, if he had ever seen them, of a recognition. No man ever turned from his presence wounded by a cold forgetfulness. When he was at Ipswich, on this same journey, Mr. Cleaveland, the minister of the town, was presented to him. As he approached, hat in hand, Washington said, "Put on your hat, parson, and I will shake hands with you." "I cannot wear my hat in your presence, general," was the reply, "when I think of what you have done for this country." "You did as much as I." "No, no," protested the parson. "Yes," said Washington, "you did what you could, and I 've done no more." What a gracious, kindly courtesy is this, and not without the salt of wit! Does it not show the perfec-

tion of good manners which deals with all men for what they are, and is full of a warm sympathy born of a good heart? He was criticised for coldness and accused of monarchical leanings, because, at Mrs. Washington's receptions and his own public levees, he stood, dressed in black velvet, with one hand on the hilt of his sword and the other behind his back, and shook hands with no one, although he talked with all. He did this because he thought it became the President of the United States upon state occasions, and his sense of the dignity of his office was always paramount. But away from forms and ceremonies, with the old servant or the old soldier, or the country parson, his hand was never behind his back, and his manners were those of a great but simple gentleman, and came straight from a kind heart, full of sympathy and good feeling.

He was, too, the most hospitable of men in the best sense, and his house was always open to all who came. When he was away during the war or the presidency, his instructions to his agents were to keep up the hospitality of Mount Vernon, just as if he had been there himself; and he was especially careful in directing that, if there were general distress, poor persons of the neighborhood should have help from his kitchen or his granaries.

His own more immediate hospitality was of the same kind. He always entertained in the most liberal manner, both as general and President, and in a style which he thought befitted the station

he occupied. But apart from all this, his table, whether at home or abroad, was never without its guest. "Dine with us," he wrote to Lear on July 31, 1797, "or we shall do what we have not done for twenty years, dine alone." The real hospitality which opens the door and spreads the board for the friend or stranger, admitting them to the family without form or ceremony, was his also. "My manner of living is plain," he wrote to a friend after the Revolution; "I do not mean to be put out of it. A glass of wine and a bit of mutton are always ready; and such as will be content to partake of them are always welcome. Those who expect more will be disappointed, but no change will be effected by it." Genuine hospitality as unstinted as it was sincere was not characteristic of a cold man, or of one who sought to avoid his fellows. It is one of the lighter graces of life, perhaps, but when it comes freely and simply, and not as a vehicle for the display or the aggrandizement of its dispenser, it is not without a meaning to the student of character.

Washington was not much given to professions of friendship, nor was he one of the great men who keep a circle of intimates and sometimes of flatterers about them. He was extremely independent of the world and perfectly self-sufficing, but it is a mistake to suppose that because he unbosomed himself to scarcely any one, and had the loneliness of greatness and of high responsibilities, he was therefore without friends. He had as many

friends as usually fall to the lot of any man; and although he laid bare his inmost heart to none, some were very close and all were very dear to him. In war and politics, as has already been said, the two men who came nearest to him were Hamilton and Knox, and his diary shows that when he was President he consulted with them nearly every day wholly apart from the regular cabinet meetings. They were the two advisers who were friends as well as secretaries, and who followed and sustained him as a matter of affection as much as politics. At home his neighbor, George Mason, although they came to differ, was a strong friend whom he liked and respected, and whose opinion, whether favorable or adverse, he always sought. His feeling to Patrick Henry was much deeper than mere political or official acquaintance, and the lovable qualities of the brilliant orator, clear even now across the gulf of a century, were evidently strongly felt by Washington. They differed about the Constitution, but Washington was eager at a later day to have Henry by his side in the cabinet, and in the last years they stood shoulder to shoulder in defense of the Union with a personal sympathy deeper than any born of a mere similarity of opinion. Henry Lee, the son of his old sweetheart, he loved with a tender and peculiar affection. He watched over him and helped him, rejoiced in the dashing gallantry which made him famous as Light-horse Harry, and, when he had won civil as well as military distinction, trusted

him and counseled with him. Dr. Craik, the companion of his youth and his life-long physician, was always a dear and close friend, and the regard between the two is very pleasant to look at, as we see it glancing out here and there in the midst of state papers and official cases. For the officers of the army he had a peculiarly warm feeling, and he had among them many close friends, like Carrington of Virginia, and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina. His immediate staff he regarded with especial affection, and it is worthy of notice that they all not only admired their great chief, but followed him with a personal devotion which is not a little curious if Washington was cold of heart and distant of manner in the intimate association of a military family.

This feeling for his soldiers and his officers extended also to those civilians who had stood by him and the army, and who had labored for victory in all those trying years. Such a one was old Governor Trumbull, "Brother Jonathan," who never failed to respond when a call was made for men and money, and upon whose friendship and advice Washington always leaned. Such, too, were Robert and Gouverneur Morris. The sacrifices and energy of the one and the zeal and brilliant abilities of the other endeared both to him, and his friendship for them never wavered when misfortune overtook the elder, and when the younger was driven by malice, both foreign and domestic, from the place he had filled so well.

Another, again, of this kind was Franklin. In the dark days of the old French war, Washington had seen displayed for the first time the force and tact of Franklin, which alone obtained the necessary wagons and enabled Braddock's army to move. The early impression thus obtained was never lost, and Franklin's patriotism, his sympathy for the general and the army in the Revolution, as well as the stanch support he gave them, aroused in Washington a sense of obligation and friendship of the sincerest kind. In proportion as he loathed ingratitude was he grateful himself. He loved Franklin for his friendship and support, he admired him for his successful diplomacy, and he reverenced him for his scientific attainments. The only American whose fame could for a moment come in competition with his own, he regarded the old philosopher with affectionate veneration, and when, after his own fashion, and not at all after the fashion of the time, he arrived in Philadelphia on the exact day set for the Constitutional Convention, his first act was to call upon Dr. Franklin and pay his respects to him. The courtesy and kindliness of this little act on the part of a man who had come to the town in the midst of shouting crowds, with joy bells ringing above his head, speak well for the simple, honest heart that dictated it.

After all, it may be said that a passing civility of this sort involved but little trouble, and was more a matter of good-breeding than anything

else. Let us look, then, at another and widely different case. Of all the men whom the fortunes of war brought across Washington's path there was none who became dearer to him than Lafayette, for the generous, high-spirited young Frenchman, full of fresh enthusiasm and brave as a lion, appealed at once to Washington's heart. He quickly admitted him to his confidence, and the excellent service of Lafayette in the field, together with his invaluable help in securing the French alliance, deepened and strengthened the sympathy and affection which were entirely reciprocal. After Lafayette departed, a constant correspondence was maintained; and when the Bastille fell, it was to Washington that Lafayette sent its key, which still hangs on the wall of Mt. Vernon. As Lafayette rose rapidly to the dangerous heights of revolutionary leadership, he had at every step Washington's advice and sympathy. Then the tide turned; he fell headlong from power, and brought up in an Austrian prison. From that moment Washington spared no pains to help his unhappy friend, although his own position was one of extreme difficulty. Lafayette was not only the proscribed exile of one country, but also the political prisoner of another, and the President could not compromise the United States at that critical moment by showing too much interest in the fate of his unhappy friend. He nevertheless went to the very edge of prudence in trying to save him, and the ministers of the United States were instructed

to use every private effort to secure Lafayette's release, or at least the mitigation of his confinement. All these attempts failed, but Washington was more successful in other directions. He sent money to Madame de Lafayette, who was absolutely beggared at the moment, and represented to her that it was in settlement of an account which he owed the marquis. When Lafayette's son and his own namesake came to this country for an asylum, he had him cared for in Boston and New York by his personal friends; George Cabot in the one case, and Hamilton in the other. As soon as public affairs made it proper for him to do it, he took the lad into his own household, treated him like a son, and kept him near him until events permitted the boy to return to Europe and rejoin his father. The sufferings and dangers of Lafayette and his family were indeed a source of great unhappiness to Washington, and we have the authority of Bradford, his attorney-general, that when the President attempted to talk about Lafayette he was so much affected that he shed tears, — a very rare exhibition of emotion in a man so intensely reserved.

Absence had as little effect upon his memory of old friends as misfortune. The latter stimulated recollection, and the former could not dim it. He found time, in the very heat and fire of war and revolution, to write to Bryan Fairfax lamenting the death of "the good old lord" whose house had been open to him, and whose hand had ever helped him when he was a young and unknown man just

beginning his career. When he returned to Mount Vernon after the presidency, full of years and honors, one of his first acts was to write to Mrs. Fairfax in England to assure her of his lasting remembrance, and to breathe a sigh over the changes time had brought, and over the by-gone years when they had been young together.

The loyalty of nature which made his remembrance of old friends so real and lasting found expression also in the thoughtfulness which he showed toward casual acquaintances, and this was especially the case when he had received attention or service at any one's hands, or when he felt that he was able to give pleasure by a slight effort on his own part. A little incident which occurred during the first year of his presidency illustrates this trait in his character very well. Uxbridge was one among the many places where he stopped on his New England tour, and when he got to Hartford he wrote to Mr. Taft, who had been his host in the former town, and who evidently cherished for him a very keen admiration, the following note: —

"November 8, 1789.

"Sir: Being informed that you have given my name to one of your sons, and called another after Mrs. Washington's family, and being moreover very much pleased with the modest and innocent looks of your two daughters, Patty and Polly, I do for these reasons send each of these girls a piece of chintz; and to Patty, who bears the name

of Mrs. Washington, and who waited more upon us than Polly did, I send five guineas, with which she may buy herself any little ornament she may want, or she may dispose of them in any other manner more agreeable to herself. As I do not give these things with a view to having it talked of, or even to its being known, the less there is said about the matter the better you will please me; but, that I may be sure the chintz and money have got safe to hand, let Patty, who I dare say is equal to it, write me a line informing me thereof, directed to 'The President of the United States at New York.' I wish you and your family well, and am," etc.

Let us turn now from friendship to nearer and closer relations. Washington was not only too reserved, but he had too much true sentiment, to leave his correspondence with Mrs. Washington behind him; for he knew that his vast collection of papers would become the material of history, and he had no mind that strangers should look into the sacred recesses of his private life. Only one letter to Mrs. Washington apparently has survived. It is simple and full of affection, as one would expect, and tells, as well as many volumes could, of the happy relations between husband and wife. Washington had many love affairs in his youth, but he proved in the end a constant lover. His wife was a high-bred, intelligent woman, simple and dignified in her manners, efficient in all

ways to be the helpmate of her husband in the high places to which he was called. No shadow ever rested on their married life, and when the end came Mrs. Washington only said, "All is over now. I shall soon follow him." She could not conceive of life without the presence of the unchanging love and noble character which had been by her side so long.

Children were denied to Washington, but although this was a disappointment it did not chill him nor narrow his sympathies, as is so often the case. He took to his heart his wife's children as if they were his own. He watched over them and cared for them, and their deaths caused him the deepest sorrow. He afterwards adopted his wife's two grandchildren, and watched over them, too, in the same way. In the midst of all the cares of the presidency, Washington found time always to write to George Custis, a boy at school or at college; while Nellie Custis was as dear to him as his own daughter, and her marriage a source of the most affectionate interest. Indeed, it is evident from various little anecdotes that he was much less strict with these children than was Mrs. Washington, and much more disposed to condone faults. Certain it is that they loved him tenderly, and in a way that only long years of loving-kindness could have made possible.

He showed the same feeling to all his own kindred. His mother was ever the object of the most loyal affection, and even at the head of the armies

he would turn aside to visit her with the same respect and devotion as when he was a mere boy. He was ever mindful of his brothers and sisters, and their fortunes. None of them were ever forgotten, and he was especially kind to the children of those who had been least fortunate and most needed his help. He educated and counseled his favorite nephew Bushrod, and did the same for the sons of George Steptoe Washington. Nothing is pleasanter than to read in the midst of official papers the long letters in which he gave these boys great store of wise and kindly advice, guided their education, strove to form their characters, and traced for them the honorable careers which he wished them to pursue. Very few men who had risen to the heights reached by Washington would have found time, in the midst of engrossing cares, to write such letters as he wrote to friends and kinsmen. A kind heart prompted them, but they were much more than merely kind, for when Washington undertook to do anything he did it thoroughly. Whether it was a treaty with England, the education of a boy, or the service of a friend, he gave it his best thought and his utmost care. Where those he loved were concerned, he was never too busy to think of them, and he spared no pains to help them; censuring faults where they existed, and giving praise in generous manner where praise was due.

To any one who carefully studies his life, it is evident that Washington was as warm-hearted

and affectionate as he was great in character and ability, and that he was so without noise or pretense. This really only amounts to saying that he was a well-balanced man, and yet even this cannot be said without admitting still another quality. The sanest of all senses is the sense of humor, and the nature in which it is wholly lacking cannot be thoroughly rounded and complete. Humor is not the most lofty of qualities, but it is one of the most essential, and it is generally assumed that Washington was very deficient in humor. This idea has arisen from a hasty consideration of the subject, and from a superficial conception of humor itself. To utter jests, or to say or write witty, brilliant, or amusing things, no doubt implies the possession of humor, but they are not the whole of it, for a man may have a fine sense of humor, and yet never make a joke nor utter a sarcasm. The distinction between humor and the want of it lies much deeper than word of mouth. The man without a sense of humor is sure to make a certain number of solemn blunders. They may be in matters of importance or in the merest trifles, but they are blunders none the less, and come from insensibility to the incongruous, the ludicrous, or the impossible. It may be said that common sense suffices to avoid these pitfalls, but this is really begging the question, inasmuch as common sense of a high order amounting almost to genius cannot exist without humor, for humor is the root and foundation of common sense. Let

us apply this test to Washington and we shall find that there never was a man who made fewer mistakes than he, down even to matters of the smallest detail. Search his career from beginning to end, and there is not a solemn blunder to be found in it. He was attacked and assailed both as general and President, but he was never laughed at. In other words, he had a sense of humor which made it impossible for him to blunder solemnly, or to do or say anything which ridicule could touch.

It is not, however, necessary to leave his possession of a sense of humor to inference from his career and his freedom from blunders. That he had humor strong, sane, and abundant is susceptible of much more direct proof; and the idea that he was lacking in this respect arose undoubtedly from the gravity of demeanor which was characteristic of the man. He had assumed the heavy responsibilities of an important military command in the French war at an age when most men are just leaving college and beginning to study a profession. This of itself sobered him, and added to his natural quiet and reserve, so that in estimating him in after-life this early and severe discipline at a most impressionable age ought never to be overlooked, for it had a very marked effect upon his character.

He was not perhaps exactly joyous or gay of nature, but he had a contented and happy disposition, and, like all robust, well-balanced men, he possessed strong animal spirits and a keen sense

of enjoyment. He loved a wild, open-air life, and was devoted to rough out-door sports. He liked to wrestle and run, to shoot, ride or dance, and to engage in all trials of skill and strength, for which his great muscular development suited him admirably. With such tastes, it followed almost as a matter of course that he loved laughter and fun. Good, hearty, country fun, a ludicrous mishap, a practical joke, all merriment of a simple, honest kind, were highly congenial to him, especially in his youth and early manhood. Here is the way, for example, in which he described in his diary a ball he attended in 1760: "In a convenient room, detached for the purpose, abounded great plenty of bread and butter, some biscuits, with tea and coffee which the drinkers of could not distinguish from hot water sweetened. Be it remembered that pocket handkerchiefs served the purposes of tablecloths, and that no apologies were made for them. I shall therefore distinguish this ball by the style and title of the bread-and-butter ball." The wit is not brilliant, but there was a good hearty laugh in the young man who jots down this little memorandum in his diary.

The years after the French war were happy years, free from care and full of simple pleasures. Then came the Revolution, bringing with it a burden such as has seldom been laid upon any man, and the seriousness bred by earlier experiences came back with tenfold force. The popular saying was that Washington never smiled during the war,

and, roughly speaking, this was quite true. In all those years of danger and trial, inasmuch as he was a man big of heart and brain, he had the gravity and the sadness born of responsibility, and the suffering sure to come to an unselfish mind. It was at this time that he began to be most closely observed of men, and hence came the idea that he never laughed, and therefore was a being devoid of humor, the most sympathetic of gifts. But as a matter of fact, the old sense of fun never left him. It would come to his aid at the most serious moments, just as an endless flow of stories brought relief to Lincoln and carried him round many jagged corners. With Washington it was hearty, laughing mirth at some ludicrous incident. Putnam riding into Cambridge with an old woman clinging behind him; Greene searching for his wig while it was on his head; a young braggart flung over the head of an unbroken colt; or a good, rollicking story from Colonel Scammel or Major Fairlie, — all these would delight Washington, and send him off into peals of inextinguishable laughter. It was ever the old, hearty love of fun born of animal spirits, which never left him, and which would always break out on sufficient provocation. Mr. Parton would have us believe that this was all, and that the commonplace hero whom he describes never rose above the level of the humor conveyed by grinning through a horse-collar. Even admitting the truth of this, a real love of honest fun and of a hearty laugh is a kindly quality that all men like.

But was this all? Is it quite true that Washington had only a love of boisterous fun, and nothing else? It is worth looking a little deeper than the current stories of the camp to find out, and yet one of these very camp-stories raises at once a strong suspicion that Mr. Parton's conclusion in this regard, like so many conclusions about Washington, is unfounded. When General Lee took the oath of allegiance to the United States, he remarked, in making abjuration of his former allegiance, that he was perfectly ready to abjure the king, but could not bring himself to abjure the Prince of Wales, at which bit of irony Washington was greatly amused. The wit of the remark is a little cold to-day, but at the moment, accompanying as it did a solemn act of abjuration, it was keen enough. Washington himself, moreover, was perfectly capable of good-natured banter. Colonel Humphreys challenged him one day to jump over a hedge. Washington, always ready to accept a challenge where riding was concerned, told the colonel to go on. Humphreys put his horse at the hedge, cleared it, and landed in a quagmire on the other side up to his horse's girths; whereupon Washington rode up, stopped, and looking blandly at his struggling friend, remarked, "Ah, colonel, you are too deep for me." "Take care," he wrote to young Custis, when he sent him money for his college gown, "not to buy without advice; otherwise you may be more distinguished by your folly than your dress."

We find in his letters here and there a good-natured raillery, and jesting, which show a sense of humor that goes beyond the limits of mere fun and horse-play. Here is a letter he wrote toward the close of the war, asking some ladies to dine with him in his quarters at West Point: —

"West Point, August 16, 1779.

"Dear Doctor: I have asked Mrs. Cochran and Mrs. Livingston to dine with me to-morrow; but ought I not to apprise you of their fare? As I hate deception, even where imagination is concerned, I will.

"It is needless to premise that my table is large enough to hold the ladies: of this they had ocular demonstration yesterday. To say how it is usually covered is rather more essential, and this shall be the purport of my letter.

"Since my arrival at this happy spot, we have had a ham, sometimes a shoulder of bacon, to grace the head of the table. A piece of roast beef adorns the foot, and a small dish of green beans — almost imperceptible — decorates the centre. When the cook has a mind to cut a figure, — and this I presume he will attempt to-morrow, — we have two beefsteak pies, or dishes of crabs, in addition, one on each side of the centre dish, dividing the space, and reducing the distance between dish and dish to about six feet, which without them would be nearly twelve feet apart. Of late he has had the surprising luck to discover that

apples will make pies; and it is a question if, amidst the violence of his efforts, we do not get one of apples instead of having both of beef.

"If the ladies can put up with such entertainment, and submit to partake of it on plates once tin, but now iron, not become so by the labor of hard scouring, I shall be happy to see them."

We may be sure that the ladies found their dinner a pleasant one, and that the writer of the note was neither a stiff nor unsocial host. A much more charming letter is one to Nellie Custis, on the occasion of her first ball. It is too long for quotation, but it is a model of affectionate wisdom tinged with a gentle humor, and designed to guide a young girl just beginning the world of society.

Here, however, is another extract from a letter to Madame de Lafayette, of rather more serious purport, but in the same strain, and full of a simple and, as we should call it, an old-fashioned grace. He was replying to an invitation to visit France, which he felt obliged to decline. After giving his reasons, he said: "This, my dear Marchioness (indulge the freedom), is not the case with you. You have youth (and, if you should incline to leave your children, you can leave them with all the advantages of education), and must have a curiosity to see the country, young, rude, and uncultivated as it is, for the liberties of which your husband has fought, bled, and acquired much glory, where everybody admires, everybody loves

him. Come, then, let me entreat you, and call my cottage your home; for your own doors do not open to you with more readiness than mine would. You will see the plain manner in which we live, and meet with rustic civility; and you shall taste the simplicity of rural life. It will diversify the scene, and may give you a higher relish for the gayeties of the court when you return to Versailles."

There is also apparent in many of his letters a vein of worldly wisdom, shrewd but kindly, too gentle to be called cynical, and yet touched with the humor which reads and appreciates the foibles of humanity. Of an officer who grumbled at disappointments during the war he wrote: "General McIntosh is only experiencing upon a small scale what I have had an ample share of upon a large one; and must, as I have been obliged to do in a variety of instances, yield to necessity; that is, to use a vulgar phrase, 'shape his coat according to his cloth,' or in other words, if he cannot do as he wishes, he must do what he can." The philosophy is homely and common enough, but the manner in which the reproof was administered shows kindly tact, one of the most difficult of arts. Here is another passage, touching on something outside the range of war and politics. He was writing to Lund Washington in regard to Mrs. Washington's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Custis, who was contemplating a second marriage. "For my own part," he said, "I never did, nor do I believe I

ever shall, give advice to a woman who is setting out on a matrimonial voyage: first, because I never could advise one to marry without her own consent; and secondly, because I know it is to no purpose to advise her to refrain when she has obtained it. A woman very rarely asks an opinion or requires advice on such an occasion till her resolution is formed; and then it is with the hope and expectation of obtaining a sanction, not that she means to be governed by your disapprobation, that she applies. In a word, the plain English of the application may be summed up in these words: 'I wish you to think as I do; but if unhappily you differ from me in opinion, my heart, I must confess, is fixed, and I have gone too far *now* to retract.'"

In the same spirit, but this time with a lurking smile at himself, did he write to the secretary of Congress for his commission: "If my commission is not necessary for the files of Congress, I should be glad to have it deposited among my own papers. It may serve *my grandchildren*, some fifty or a hundred years hence, for a theme to ruminate upon, if *they* should be contemplatively disposed."

He knew human nature well, and had a smile for its little weaknesses when they came to his mind. It was this same human sympathy which made him also love amusements of all sorts; but he was as little their slave as their enemy. No man ever carried great burdens with a higher or more serious spirit, but his cares never made him

forbidding, nor rendered him impatient of the pleasure of others. He liked to amuse himself, and knew the value of a change of thought and scene, and he was always ready, when duty permitted, for a chat. He liked to take a comfortable seat and have his talk out, and he had the talent so rare in great men of being a good and appreciative listener. We hear of him playing cards at Tappan during the war, and he was always fond of a game in the evening, realizing the force of Talleyrand's remark to the despiser of cards: "Quelle triste vieillesse vous vous préparez." In 1779 it is recorded that at a party he danced for three hours with Mrs. Greene without sitting down or resting, which speaks well for the health and spirits both of the lady and the gentleman. Even after Yorktown, he was ready to walk a minuet at a ball, and to the end he liked to see young people dance, as he had danced himself in his youth. As has been seen from his treatment of Bernard, he liked the theatre and the actors, and when he was in Philadelphia he was a constant attendant at the play, as he had been ever since he went to see "George Barnwell" in the Barbadoes. His love of horses stayed with him to the last. He not only rode and drove and trained horses,[1] but he enjoyed the sport of the race-course.

[1] The Marquis de Chastelleux speaks of the perfect training of Washington's saddle horses, and says the general broke them himself. He adds "He (the general) is an excellent and bold horseman, leaping the highest fences and going extremely quick, without standing upon his stirrups, bearing on the bridle or letting

He was probably aware, like the Shah of Persia who declined to go to the Derby, that one horse could run faster than another, but nevertheless he liked to see them run, and we hear of him, after he had reached the presidency, acting as judge at a race, and seeing his own colt Magnolia beaten, which he no doubt considered the next best thing to winning.

He had, indeed, in all ways a thoroughly well-balanced mind and temper. In great affairs he knew how to spare himself the details to which others could attend as well as he, and yet he was in no wise a despiser of small things. Before the Revolution, there was a warm discussion in the Truro parish as to the proper site for the Pohick Church. Washington and George Mason led respectively the opposing forces, and each confidently asserted that the site he preferred was the most convenient for the largest number of parishioners. Finally, after much debate and no conclusion, Washington appeared at a vestry meeting with a collection of statistics. He had measured the distance from each proposed site to the house of each parishioner, and found, as he declared, that his site was nearer to more people than the other. It is needless to add that he carried his point, and that the spot he desired for the church was the one chosen.

his horse run wild; circumstances which our young men look upon as so essential a part of English horsemanship, that they would rather break a leg or an arm than renounce them."

The fact was that, if he confided a task of any sort to another, he let it go on without meddling; but if he undertook anything himself, he did it with the utmost thoroughness, and there is much success in this capacity to take pains even in small things. He managed his plantations entirely himself when he was at home, and did it well. He knew the qualities of each field, and the rotation of its crops. No improvement in agriculture and no ingenious invention escaped his attention, although he was not to be carried away by mere novelty, which had such a fascination for his ex-secretary at Monticello. Every resource of his estate was turned to good use, and his flour and tobacco commanded absolute confidence with his brand upon them. He followed in the same painstaking way all his business affairs, and his accounts, all in his own hand, are wonderfully minute and accurate. He was very exact in all business as well as very shrewd at a bargain, and the tradition is that his neighbors considered the general a formidable man in a horse-trade, that most difficult of transactions. Parkinson mentions that everything purchased or brought to the house was weighed, measured, or counted, generally in the presence of the master himself. Some of his letters to Lear, his private secretary, show that he looked after his china and servants, the packing and removal of his furniture with great minuteness. To some persons this appears evidence of a petty mind in a great man, but to those who

reflect a little more deeply it will occur that this accuracy and care in trifles were the same qualities which kept the American army together, and enabled their owner to arrive on time and in full preparation at Yorktown and Trenton. The worst that can be said is that from his love of perfection and completeness he may in this respect have wasted time and strength, but his untiring industry and his capacity for work were so great that he accomplished so far as we can see all this drudgery without ever neglecting in the least more important duties. It was a satisfaction to him to do it; for he was methodical and exact to the last degree, and he was never happy unless he held everything in which he was concerned easily within his grasp.

He had the same attention to details in external things, and he wished everything about him to be of the best, if not "express'd in fancy." He had the handsomest carriages and the finest horses always in his stables. It was necessary that the furniture of his house should be as good as could be procured, and he was most particular in regard to it. When he was preparing as President to move to Philadelphia, he made the most searching inquiries as to horses, stables, servants, schools for young Custis, and everything affecting the household. He sent at the same time most minute directions to his agents as to the furniture of his house, touching upon everything, down to the color of the curtains and the form of his wine-

coolers. He had a like feeling in regard to dress. His fancy for handsome and appropriate dress in his youth has already been alluded to, but he never ceased to take an interest in it; and in a letter to McHenry, written in the last year of his life, he discusses with great care the details of the uniform to be prescribed for himself as commander-in-chief of the new army. It would be a mistake, of course, to infer that he was a dandy, or that he gave to dress and furniture the importance set upon them by shallow minds. He simply valued them rightly, and enjoyed the good things of this world. He had the best possible taste and the keenest sense of what was appropriate, and it was this good taste and sense of fitness which saved him from blundering in trifles, as much as his ability and his sense of humor preserved him from error in the conduct of great affairs.

The value of all this to the country he served cannot be too often reiterated, for ridicule was a real danger to the Revolutionary cause when it started. The raw levies, headed by volunteer officers from the shop, the plough, the work-bench, or the trading vessel, despite their patriotism and the nobility of their cause, could easily have been made subjects of derision, a perilous enemy to all new undertakings. Men prefer to be shot at, if they are taken seriously, rather than to be laughed at and made objects of contempt. The same principle holds true of a revolution seeking the sympathy of a hostile world. When Washington drew

his sword beneath the Cambridge elm and put himself at the head of the American army, effective ridicule became impossible, for the dignity of the cause was seen in that of its leader. The British generals soon found that they not only had a dangerous enemy to encounter, but that they were dealing with a man whose pride in his country and whose own sense of self-respect reduced any assumption of personal superiority on their part to speedy contempt. In the same way he brought dignity to the new government of the Constitution when he was placed at its head. The confederation had excited the just contempt of the world, and Washington as President, by the force of his own character and reputation, gave the United States at once the respect not only of the American people, but of those of Europe as well. Men felt instinctively that no government over which he presided could ever fall into feebleness or disrepute.

In addition to the effect on the popular mind of his character and services was that of his personal presence. If contemporary testimony can be believed, few men have ever lived who had the power to impress those who looked upon them so profoundly as Washington. He was richly endowed by nature in all physical attributes. Well over six feet high,[1] large, powerfully built, and of un-

[1] Lear in his memoranda published recently in full in McClure's Magazine for February, 1898, states that Washington measured after death six feet three and one half inches in height,

common muscular strength, he had the force that always comes from great physical power. He had a fine head, a strong face, with blue eyes set wide apart in deep orbits, and beneath, a square jaw and firm-set mouth which told of a relentless will. Houdon the sculptor, no bad judge, said he had no conception of the majesty and grandeur of Washington's form and features until he studied him as a subject for a statue. Pages might be filled with extracts from the descriptions of Washington given by French officers, by all sorts of strangers, and by his own countrymen, but they all repeat the same story. Every one who met him told of the commanding presence, and noble person, the ineffable dignity, and the calm, simple, and stately manners. No man ever left Washington's presence without a feeling of reverence and respect amounting almost to awe.

I will quote only a single one of the numerous descriptions of Washington, and I select it because, although it is the least favorable of the many I have seen, and is written in homely phrase, it displays the most evident and entire sincerity. The extract is from a letter written by David Ackerson of Alexandria, Va., in 1811, in answer to an inquiry by his son. Mr. Ackerson commanded a company in the Revolutionary war.

"Washington was not," he wrote, "what ladies

a foot and nine inches across the shoulders, two feet across the elbows; evidently a spare man with muscular arms, which we know to have been also of unusual length.

would call a pretty man, but in military costume a heroic figure, such as would impress the memory ever afterward."

The writer had a good view of Washington three days before the crossing of the Delaware.

"Washington," he says, "had a large thick nose, and it was very red that day, giving me the impression that he was not so moderate in the use of liquors as he was supposed to be. I found afterward that this was a peculiarity. His nose was apt to turn scarlet in a cold wind. He was standing near a small camp-fire, evidently lost in thought and making no effort to keep warm. He seemed six feet and a half in height, was as erect as an Indian, and did not for a moment relax from a military attitude. Washington's exact height was six feet two inches in his boots. He was then a little lame from striking his knee against a tree. His eye was so gray that it looked almost white, and he had a troubled look on his colorless face. He had a piece of woolen tied around his throat and was quite hoarse. Perhaps the throat trouble from which he finally died had its origin about then. Washington's boots were enormous. They were number 13. His ordinary walking-shoes were number 11. His hands were large in proportion, and he could not buy a glove to fit him and had to have his gloves made to order. His mouth was his strong feature, the lips being always tightly compressed. That day they were compressed so tightly as to be painful to look at. At

that time he weighed two hundred pounds, and there was no surplus flesh about him. He was tremendously muscled, and the fame of his great strength was everywhere. His large tent when wrapped up with the poles was so heavy that it required two men to place it in the camp-wagon. Washington would lift it with one hand and throw it in the wagon as easily as if it were a pair of saddle-bags. He could hold a musket with one hand and shoot with precision as easily as other men did with a horse-pistol. His lungs were his weak point, and his voice was never strong. He was at that time in the prime of life. His hair was a chestnut brown, his cheeks were prominent, and his head was not large in contrast to every other part of his body, which seemed large and bony at all points. His finger-joints and wrists were so large as to be genuine curiosities. As to his habits at that period I found out much that might be interesting. He was an enormous eater, but was content with bread and meat, if he had plenty of it. But hunger seemed to put him in a rage. It was his custom to take a drink of rum or whiskey on awakening in the morning. Of course all this was changed when he grew old. I saw him at Alexandria a year before he died. His hair was very gray, and his form was slightly bent. His chest was very thin. He had false teeth, which did not fit and pushed his under lip outward."[1]

[1] This letter, recently printed, is in the collection of Dr. Toner,

This description is certainly not a flattering one, and all other accounts as well as the best portraits prove that Washington was a much handsomer man than this letter would indicate. Yet the writer, despite his freedom from all illusions and his readiness to state frankly all defects, was profoundly impressed by Washington's appearance as he watched him meditating by the camp-fire at the crisis of the country's fate, and herein lies the principal interest of his description.

This personal impressiveness, however, affected every one upon all occasions.

Mr. Rush, for instance, saw Washington go on one occasion to open Congress. He drove to the hall in a handsome carriage of his own, with his servants dressed in white liveries. When he had alighted he stopped on the step, and pausing faced round to wait for his secretary. The vast crowd looked at him in dead silence, and then, when he turned away, broke into wild cheering. At his second inauguration he was dressed in deep mourning for the death of his nephew. He took the oath of office in the Senate Chamber, and Major Forman, who was present, wrote in his diary: "Every eye was on him. When he said, 'I, George Washington,' my blood seemed to run cold and every one seemed to start." At the inauguration of Adams, another eye-witness wrote

at Washington. It contains some obvious errors, as in regard to the color of the eyes, but it is nevertheless very interesting and valuable.

that Washington, dressed in black velvet, with a military hat and black cockade, was the central figure in the scene, and when he left the chamber the crowds followed him, cheering and shouting to the door of his own house.

There must have been something very impressive about a man who, with no pretensions to the art of the orator and with no touch of the charlatan, could so move and affect vast bodies of men by his presence alone. But the people, with the keen eye of affection, looked beyond the mere outward nobility of form. They saw the soldier who had given them victory, the great statesman who had led them out of confusion and faction to order and good government. Party newspapers might rave, but the instinct of the people was never at fault. They loved, trusted and wellnigh worshiped Washington living, and they have honored and reverenced him with an unchanging fidelity since his death, nearly a century ago.

But little more remains to be said. Washington had his faults, for he was human; but they are not easy to point out, so perfect was his mastery of himself. He was intensely reserved and very silent, and these are the qualities which gave him the reputation in history of being distant and unsympathetic. In truth, he had not only warm affections and a generous heart, but there was a strong vein of sentiment in his composition. At the same time he was in no wise romantic, and the ruling element in his make-up was prose, good

solid prose, and not poetry. He did not have the poetical and imaginative quality so strongly developed in Lincoln. Yet he was not devoid of imagination, although it was here that he was lacking, if anywhere. He saw facts, knew them, mastered and used them, and never gave much play to fancy; but as his business in life was with men and facts, this deficiency, if it was one, was of little moment....

He had, too, a fierce temper, and although he gradually subdued it, he would sometimes lose control of himself and burst out into a tempest of rage. When he did so he would use a strong and even violent language, as he did at Kip's Landing and at Monmouth. Well-intentioned persons in their desire to make him a faultless being have argued at great length that Washington never swore, and but for their argument the matter would never have attracted much attention. He was anything but a profane man, but the evidence is beyond question that if deeply angered he would use a hearty English oath; and not seldom the action accompanied the word, as when he rode among the fleeing soldiers at Kip's Landing, striking them with his sword, and almost beside himself at their cowardice. Judge Marshall used to tell also of an occasion when Washington sent out an officer to cross a river and bring back some information about the enemy, on which the action of the morrow would depend. The officer was gone some time, came back, and found the general impatiently pacing his tent. On being

asked what he had learned, he replied that the night was dark and stormy, the river full of ice, and that he had not been able to cross. Washington glared at him a moment, seized a large leaden inkstand from the table, hurled it at the offender's head, and said with a fierce oath, "Be off, and send me a *man!*" The officer went, crossed the river, and brought back the information.

But although he would now and then give way to these tremendous bursts of anger, Washington was never unjust. As he said to one officer, "I never judge the propriety of actions by after events;" and in that sound philosophy is found the secret not only of his own success, but of the devotion of his officers and men. He might be angry with them, but he was never unfair. In truth, he was too generous to be unjust or even over-severe to any one, and there is not a line in all his writings which even suggests that he ever envied any man. So long as the work in hand was done, he cared not who had the glory, and he was perfectly magnanimous and perfectly at ease about his own reputation. He never showed the slightest anxiety to write his own memoirs, and he was not in the least alarmed when it was proposed to publish the memoirs of other people, like General Charles Lee, which would probably reflect upon him.

He had the same confidence in the judgment of posterity that he had in the future beyond the grave. He regarded death with entire calmness and even indifference not only when it came to him, but when

in previous years it had threatened him. He loved life and tasted of it deeply, but the courage which never forsook him made him ready to face the inevitable at any moment with an unruffled spirit. In this he was helped by his religious faith, which was as simple as it was profound. He had been brought up in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and to that church he always adhered; for its splendid liturgy and stately forms appealed to him and satisfied him. He loved it too as the church of his home and his childhood. Yet he was as far as possible from being sectarian, and there is not a word of his which shows anything but the most entire liberality and toleration. He made no parade of his religion, for in this as in other things he was perfectly simple and sincere. He was tortured by no doubts or questionings, but believed always in an overruling Providence and in a merciful God, to whom he knelt and prayed in the day of darkness or in the hour of triumph with a supreme and childlike confidence.

CONTEMPORARY TRIBUTES TO WASHINGTON

"And here, Sir, I cannot help alluding to the President of the United States, General Washington, a character whose conduct has been so different from that which has been pursued by the ministers of this country. How infinitely wiser must appear the spirit and principles manifested in his late address to Congress than the policy of modern European courts! Illustrious man, deriving honor less from the splendor of his situation than from the dignity of his mind; before whom all borrowed greatness sinks into significance, and all the potentates of Europe (excepting the members of our own royal family) become little and contemptible! He has had no occasion to have recourse to any tricks of policy or arts of alarm; his authority has been sufficiently supported by the same means by which it was acquired, and his conduct has uniformly been characterized by wisdom, moderation, and firmness." — *Charles James Fox, Member of the Parliament of Great Britain* (1794).

"I have seen him in the days of adversity, in some of the scenes of his deepest distress and most trying perplexities; I have also attended him in his highest elevation and most prosperous felicity; with uniform admiration of his wisdom, moderation, and constancy.... Malice could never blast his honor, and envy made him a singular exception to her universal rule. For himself he had lived enough, to life and to glory. For his fellow citizens, if their prayers could have been answered, he would have been immortal. For me, his departure is at a most unfortunate moment.... His example is now complete, and

it will teach wisdom and virtue to magistrates, citizens, and men, not only in the present age, but in future generations, as long as our history shall be read." — *John Adams, President of the United States* (1799).

"The people who so lately stigmatized Washington as a rebel regard even the enfranchisement of America as one of the events consecrated by history and past ages. Such is the veneration excited by great characters. He seems so little to belong to modern times that he imparts to us the same vivid impressions as the most august examples of antiquity with all that they accomplished. His work is scarcely finished when it at once attracts the veneration which we freely accord to those achievements only that are consecrated by time. The American Revolution, the contemporary of our own, is fixed forever. Washington began it with energy, and finished it with moderation. He knew how to maintain it, pursuing always the prosperity of his country; and this aim alone can justify at the tribunal of the Most High enterprises so extraordinary.

"His administration was as mild and firm in internal affairs as it was noble and prudent toward foreign nations. He uniformly respected the usages of other countries, as he would desire the rights of Americans to be respected by them. Thus, in all his negotiations, the heroic simplicity of the President of the United States, without elevation or debasement, was brought into communication with the majesty of kings. He sought not in his administration those conceptions which the age calls great, but which he regarded as vain. His ideas were more sage than bold; he sought not admiration, but he always enjoyed esteem, alike in the field and in the Senate, in the midst of business as in the quiet of retirement." — *Napoleon Bonaparte, First Consul of France* (1800).

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